

ORDERING CODE AND MEDIATING MACHINE

LE CORBUSIER AND THE ROOTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROMENADE

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LE CORBUSIER AND THE ROOTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROMENADE

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the roots of Le Corbusier's concept of "promenade architecturale" by examining his formative years between the early education in La Chaux-de-Fonds and the journey to the East. The architectural promenade is here understood as a basic concept of Le Corbusier that informs the many factors implicated in his work. I start by proposing a broad understanding of the architectural promenade, seeing the concept as an expression for the experiential dimension of architecture and landscape. This experiential dimension, I argue, is broadly submitted to a pattern rooted in his early formative years—a pattern which developed along with the other themes and concepts that he absorbed during this early period, and which, like these, had deep consequences in his work and thought.

It is my argument that this experiential pattern is rooted in the dialectical categories of the picturesque and the Sublime in landscape experience. This is shown through an analysis of his academic works in La Chaux-de-Fonds, made between 1902 and 1907. The study of the following traveling period—the trip to Italy and Vienna in 1907-1908, the Parisian sojourn between 1908 and 1909, the German sojourn between 1910 and 1911, and the journey to the East in 1911—shows the many intellectual discourses that he was exposed to, and how, through these, the initial dialectical categories crystallized during the school years were gradually enriched with Romantic aesthetics and philosophical concepts, acquiring architectural specificity.

The analysis of this process through his early works and writings allows us to understand the formation and meaning of the promenade's experiential pattern, and reevaluate the extent to which it partakes in Le Corbusier's rich and complex multilayered architectural discourse. What can be broadly termed as architectural promenade is seen as a manifestation of Le Corbusier's code of ordering spaces and organizing the world, through which he invested them with a symbolic dimension and philosophical world-view. Together with technical, practical, and aesthetic factors, Le Corbusier's architectural promenade is understood as a fundamental component of his Romantic project for integrating man and the world.

key words

Le Corbusier; Jeanneret; Promenade architecturale; Modern architecture; space experience.

## RESUMO

Esta dissertação analisa as origens do conceito de “promenade architecturale” de Le Corbusier, examinando os anos de formação compreendidos entre os estudos artísticos em La Chaux-de-Fonds e a viagem ao Oriente. A “promenade architecturale” é aqui entendida como um conceito básico de Le Corbusier que informa os diversos factores que o seu trabalho envolve. Começando por propor um entendimento alargado da “promenade architecturale”, o conceito é visto como expressão da dimensão experiencial da arquitectura e do espaço natural. Defende-se que esta dimensão experiencial é, em termos gerais, submetida a um padrão com origem nos anos de formação – um padrão que se desenvolveu a par com outros temas e conceitos absorvidos durante este período, e que, tal como aqueles, teve profundas consequências no seu trabalho e pensamento.

O argumento que se defende aqui é o de que este padrão experiencial tem origem nas categorias dialécticas do pitoresco e do Sublime na experiência do espaço natural. Isto é demonstrado através da análise dos seus trabalhos académicos em La Chaux-de-Fonds, elaborados entre 1902 e 1907. O estudo do período de viagens que se segue – a viagem a Itália e Viena em 1907 e 1908, a estada em Paris entre 1908 e 1909, a estada na Alemanha entre 1910 e 1911, e a viagem ao Oriente de 1911 – explora os diversos discursos intelectuais aos quais esteve exposto, e como, através destes, a inicial dialéctica de categorias cristalizada durante os anos de escola foi gradualmente enriquecida com conceitos estéticos e filosóficos românticos, adquirindo especificidade arquitectónica.

A análise deste processo através dos seus primeiros trabalhos e escritos permite-nos entender a formação e significado do padrão experiencial da “promenade” e reavaliar até que ponto este participa no rico e complexo discurso arquitectónico de Le Corbusier. Aquilo que, num sentido lato, se pode chamar de “promenade architecturale” é visto como uma manifestação do seu código de organização do espaço e de ordenação do mundo, através do qual Le Corbusier os investiu com uma dimensão simbólica e uma filosofia existencialista. Juntamente com os factores técnicos, práticos e estéticos, a “promenade architecturale” de Le Corbusier é entendida como uma componente fundamental do seu projecto romântico para integrar o homem no mundo.

Palavras chave

Le Corbusier; Jeanneret; Promenade architecturale; modern architecture; space experience.

## PREFACE

Le Corbusier is perhaps the most widely studied architect of all times. As Kenneth Frampton has noted, *it will be a long time before we shall free ourselves from the fertility of his vision and the range of his influence*. He is in our DNA, just as the nineteenth century is in the DNA of the modernist generation. It is this fertility and the rich complexity of his elaborations on the essence of modern architecture that make him so good to think with still today.

This work mainly focuses on Le Corbusier's formative years. I will generally refer to him as Jeanneret, his birth name, Le Corbusier being used after 1920. With few exceptions dictated by the clarity of speech, I will preserve the original version of his written statements because I believe his rhetoric and aphoristic way of writing is best understood in this way. For the sake of consistency, I will adopt the same principle for other authors. For occasional translations I follow the English editions: Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, trans. John Goodman (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008) for *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923); Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*, trans. Ivan Žaknic, rev. ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), for *Voyage d'Orient* (Paris: Éditions Forces Vives, 1966). For the remaining translations, unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Throughout this work I will frequently refer to Jeanneret's correspondence. That with his parents is at the Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds. The period that concerns us here as been recently published as *Le Corbusier, correspondance: Lettres à la famille 1900-1925*, vol. 1, ed. Rémi Baudouï and Arnaud Dercelles (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2011). The correspondence with Charles L'Eplattenier is at the Fondation Le Corbusier, and that with Auguste Perret is at the Institut Français d'Architecture. These are published in the first two volumes of *Le Corbusier, Lettres à ses maîtres*, ed. Marie-Jeanne Dumont (Paris: Éditions du Linteau, 2002-2006). The correspondence with William Ritter is at the Schweizerische Landsbibliothek in Bern. Copies are available at the Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds and at the Fondation Le Corbusier.

In the transcriptions of Jeanneret's handwritten notes I will preserve the abbreviations:

“1”	un(e)
“av.”	avec
“bp”	beaucoup
“c-a-d”	c'est-à-dire

“ds”	dans
“gd”	grand(e)
“gds”	grands(es)
“nb”	nombre
“ns”	nous
“p”	pour

The following abbreviations are used for the archives:

FLC	Fondation Le Corbusier
BV	Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds
EAA	École d’art appliqué de La Chaux-de-Fonds
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
INHA	Institut national d’histoire de l’art

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For their assistance in my research I thank: at the Fondation Le Corbusier, Arnaud Dercelles, chief archivist, and Madame Delphine Studer; at the Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Madame Sylvie Béguelin, former responsible for the sector of research and information; at the École d'art appliqués de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Madame Catherine Corthésy, librarian.

Words only partially express what I felt toward the supervisors of this thesis:

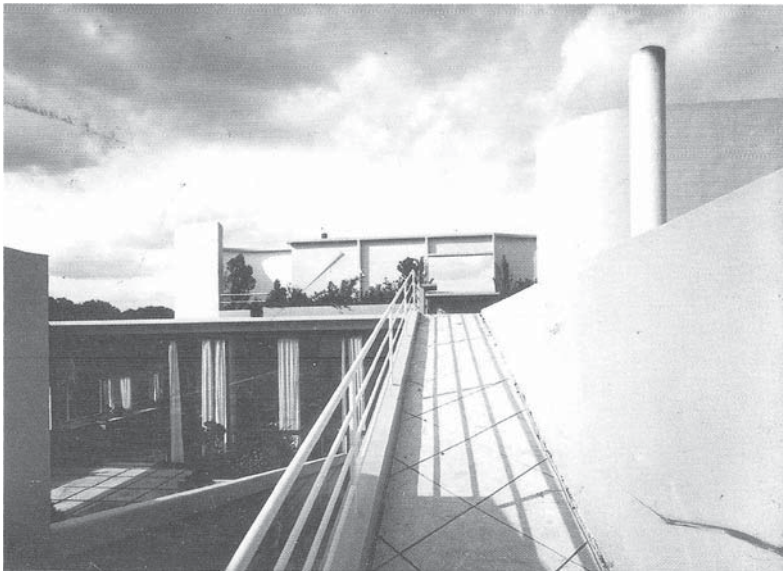
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**FIG. 1** Le Corbusier. Villa Savoye, 1929-1930.



## INTRODUCTION

Any attempt to delve into the architectural experience in Le Corbusier's work must inevitably take into account the Villa Savoye and his concept of "promenade architecturale." It is widely assumed that the villa constitutes the ultimate achievement of Le Corbusier's explorations of the 1920s; and few would deny that it represents the most complete statement of the architectural promenade. This suggests a close engagement of Le Corbusier's architectural design of the 1920s with the notion of spatiotemporal experience. At a broad level, the aesthetic experience of the villa begins with a rotational or meandering approach to its architectural volume and concludes at the roof terrace, where the gaze is directed towards the surrounding landscape. These two moments are connected by a range of intervening experiences within the architectural space, taking place along an ascending progression towards the high vantage point, while the free plan displays the interior against the outer envelope and the greenery beyond. On the outside, the narrative is overtly associated with the aesthetic enjoyment of moving around the elementary form. Raised on pilotis, the volume floats, enhancing the full three-dimensionality of its sculptural quality set against the sky. The rotational movement is articulated around the axis to which the design is submitted, materialized in the main inner path—the ramp—and extended through the window pierced into the wall at the top, framing the view directly ahead of the ramp. It is along this guiding axis that the eyes are led to travel beyond (fig. 1). In the second volume of the *Œuvre complète*, after extolling the site and explaining that the volume of the villa was conceived as an object raised over the ground in order to maintain the natural features of the terrain, Le Corbusier depicts the experience provided by the conflating of natural and manmade. The house is then described through a comprehensive dynamic experience—the car travel from the city to the country, the approach by car, the ascending progression along the central ramp, and the view over the landscape at the top. "Il s'agit d'une véritable promenade."<sup>1</sup>

1 "Leur idée était simple ; ils avaient un magnifique parc formé de prés entourés de forêt; ils désiraient vivre à la campagne ; ils étaient reliés à Paris par 30 km d'auto. On va donc à la porte de la maison en auto ... L'auto s'engage sous les pilotis ... arrive au milieu ... La maison se posera au milieu de l'herbe comme un objet, sans rien déranger ... Si l'on est debout dans l'herbe, on ne voit pas très loin l'étendue ... le véritable jardin de la maison ne sera pas sur le sol, mais au-dessus du sol ... ce sera le jardin suspendu ... et c'est de ce sol qu'on verra bien tout le paysage ... Mais on continue la promenade. Depuis le jardin à l'étage, on monte par la rampe sur le toit de la maison où est le solarium. L'architecture arabe nous donne un enseignement précieux. Elle s'apprécie à la marche, avec le pied ; c'est en marchant, en se développer les ordonnances de l'architecture. C'est un principe contraire à l'architecture baroque qui est conçue sur le papier, autour d'un point fixe théorique ... Dans cette maison-ci, il s'agit d'une véritable promenade architecturale, offrant des aspects constamment variés, inattendus, parfois étonnants. Il est intéressant d'obtenir tant de diversité quand on a, par exemple, admis au point de vue constructif, un schéma de poteaux et de poutres d'une rigueur absolue. La construction est fait

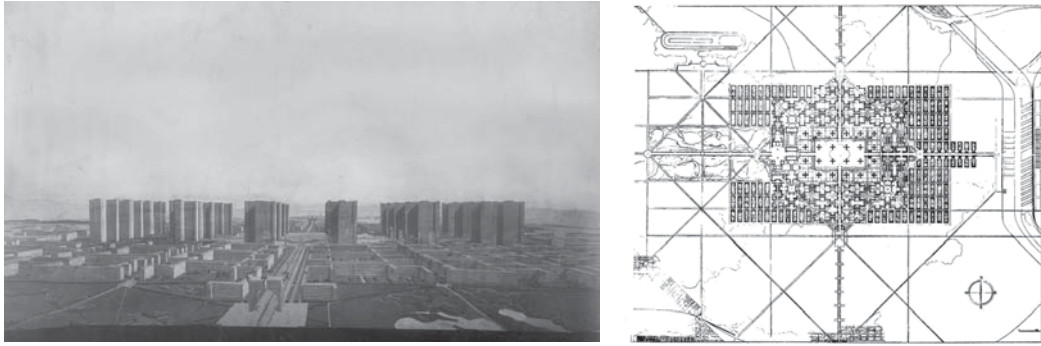


FIG. 2, 3 Le Corbusier. Ville Contemporaine, 1922. Diorama; plan.

A similar experiential pattern is proposed in the Ville Contemporaine.<sup>2</sup> The bird's eye view of the diorama enhances the architectural features: the grid upon the plain, the rhythm of simple forms, the pyramidal silhouette (fig. 2, 3). The low aerial view highlights the relationships between the natural and the manmade: the skyscrapers faintly rise above the far landscape, preceded by the sequential planes of the apartment houses, while the main axis leads the eyes towards the horizontal ridge beyond the central square. The angled view enhances the three-dimensionality of the representation. Also, it provides human referent to the represented abstraction; it constructs a mental dynamic experience of the city, suggesting the approach from a plane at the precise moment when the changing direction reveals the city center and the axis pointing to the mountain in the background. Indeed, the angled view may be seen as a representational device purposely used to construct a mental spatiotemporal experience in the beholder that precedes and expands the unfolding cityscape experienced by the inhabitant from within the city—"Si l'orthogonal donne le sens de la loi structurale des choses, l'oblique n'est que le signe d'un instant passager."<sup>3</sup>

On one level, one senses the plane's preceding rotational movement, providing a sequential bodily experience through which the beholder apprehends the unity of the

•••

sur un jeu de poteaux équidistants, portant des chevalets qui, eux-mêmes, supportent des poutrelles régulières et égales : ossature indépendante, plan libre." Le Corbusier, *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret: Œuvre complète 1929-1934*, vol. 2 (Zurich: Girsberger, 1934), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Literature on the Ville Contemporaine has often taken the discourse on function as a point of departure. Francesco Passanti's writings, on the contrary, have contextualized it in Le Corbusier's early education and aesthetic intents. It is upon his writings that I build my approach to it. For how the plan came about see Francesco Passanti, "The Skyscrapers of the Ville Contemporaine," *Assemblage* no. 4 (October 1987): 52–65. First published in French as "Le Corbusier et le gratte-ciel, aux origines du Plan Voisin," in Jean-Louis Cohen and Hubert Damisch, eds., *Américanisme et modernité: L'idéal américain dans l'architecture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), 171–190; German version as "Wolkenkratzer für die Ville Contemporaine," in Stanislaus von Moos, ed., *L'Esprit Nouveau, Le Corbusier und die Industrie 1920-1925*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1987), 54–65. For the aesthetic dimension in the Ville Contemporaine and Le Corbusier's urban plans in general see idem., "The Aesthetic Dimension in Le Corbusier's Urban Planning," in *Jospep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969*, ed. Eric Munford and Hashim Sarkis, with Neyran Turan (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 25–37. For the formal and proportional principles of the grid see his "Architecture: Proportion, Classicism and Other Issues," in *Le Corbusier Before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, Photography, 1907-1922*, ed. Stanislaus von Moos and Arthur Rüegg, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), 68–97.

<sup>3</sup> Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, "L'angle droit," *L'Esprit nouveau* no. 18 (November 1923): n.p.

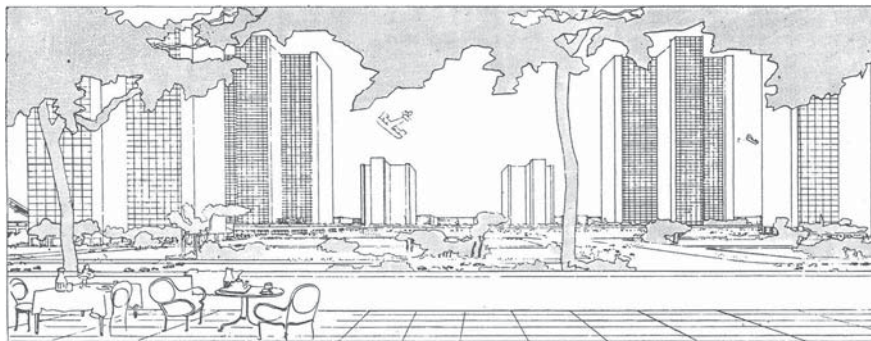


FIG. 4 Le Corbusier. *Ville Contemporaine*, 1922. Perspective.

pyramidal object, i.e., “the intelligible structure which provides the explanation of it.”<sup>4</sup> On another level, one mentally constructs a recessive space at the street level, where the architectural rhythm that imprints depth on space is displaced to the periphery of the inhabitant’s vision and the gaze is directed towards the far mountains. In short, through the distant suggestion of an elementary plastic form, the city is apprehended as an object, and to look at an object “is to inhabit it, and from this habitation to grasp all things in terms of the aspect which they present to it.”<sup>5</sup> Significantly, every single perspective of the plan is slightly angled or out of axis, even when a frontal view would suffice to portray the three-dimensionality of the plan, seemingly trying to instill in the beholder a mental construction of the dynamic experience of the inhabitant.

A single exception can be found to the kind of city views just described: the view from a café at the terrace of one of the four stories high buildings circling the central square (fig. 4). The rhythmic geometry of the skyscrapers dominates the view, the high vantage point offering an overview of the grid and the greenery binding the architectural volumes at the street level. Though slightly off axis, the square and skyscrapers are frontally portrayed, suggesting repose more than movement. And yet, human referents are openly provided. Through the table and chairs, the beholder senses the presence of the inhabitant staring at the urban daily life and airplane traffic, standing still on the terrace.

When the oblique view of the diorama and the near frontal view from the terrace are put side by side, it might be argued that they represent two main moments of a narrative through which the city is meant to be experienced, paralleling the experience proposed in the *Villa Savoye*. The axial view from the terrace mentally expands the narrative conveyed in the diorama. The parapet, frontally portrayed, suggests the end of a route; only the eyes and the mind can travel beyond. As for the remaining perspectives, they may be seen as intermediate moments of this continuum. In these two cases, the urban and architectural principles are essentially the same, submitted to a similar

4 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1962), 203.

5 *Ibid.*, 68.

narrative, aesthetic enjoyment of form, and dialectics of geometric object vs. nature.

What I am suggesting is that Le Corbusier conceptualized both the city and the villa in terms of a comprehensive experience of the natural and the manmade, involving a three-step experiential pattern centered on the inhabitant's perceptual dynamics, concluding with a mental or spiritual experience enacted at a high vantage point, even though the notions of bodily engaged and spiritual experience may seem alien to the abstract quality of his design and functional-oriented discourse. This is not surprising, as his narratives very often conceal something else. Indeed, the more we look at Le Corbusier's work of the 1920s, the more this ascending narrative guiding the gaze towards the landscape and the city along the architectural axis at a high vantage point emerges as a constant, suggesting that the perceptual experience of architecture partakes in a broader philosophical world-view.

The house is a machine for living, but also a place for meditation; so wrote Le Corbusier.<sup>6</sup> My understanding is that, partaking in a comprehensive experience of the world, the 1920s *machine for living* is thought of as a *mediating machine* through which man would come to terms with the world. The everyday life activity and its practical requirements acquire a meaningful dimension by merging with this narrative pattern, expressing and enacting an initiatory relationship with nature. Together with the axially oriented geometric forms, this narrative constitutes Le Corbusier's *code of ordering spaces* and *organizing the world*—to borrow Richard Etlin's words<sup>7</sup>—through which he invested them with a symbolic dimension and meaningful experience to be lived-through by a culturally renewed inhabitant. This narrative pattern constitutes the experiential ordering code of his architecture and urban plans. This is what I am going to argue in this work. Because the narrative pattern underlying this ordering code emerges as a constant, one is led to believe that it is deep-rooted in Le Corbusier's formative years. Such reasoning frames the temporal scope of this research.

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** In arguing that this experiential code constitutes the essence of Le Corbusier's "architectural promenade," it is probably necessary to qualify the term before going any further. Scholarly interest in Le Corbusier's architectural promenade is not recent. Most of the authors who have written about Le Corbusier have made their comments on the issue, often in unexpected places. This suggests the inextricable links between the concept and the work. While its association with

6 Le Corbusier, "Architecture d'époque machiniste," *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique* no. 13 (March 1926): 336.

7 Richard A. Etlin, *Symbolic Space: French Enlightenment Architecture and Its Legacy* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), XX. As it will become clear in chap. 2, I borrow the idea of architecture as a mediator between man and the landscape from Passanti's discussion on Jeanneret's visit to the monastery of Ema.

the Villa Savoye and the Maison La Roche has become a common place, an overview of the writings of a wide array of scholars, crossing the programmatic diversity and the distinct phases of his architecture, shows that the concept has been called upon in the interpretation of the most varied of Le Corbusier's works under different perspectives. These range from the early links with modern aesthetics focused on the equation space-time or on film—with contributions spanning from Sigfried Giedion or Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky to Yve-Alain Bois, Beatriz Colomina, Anthony Vidler, or François Penz—to phenomenological architectural analyses, ranging from the early 1920s design such as the atelier Ozenfant, where Tim Benton has seen the “first exercise in the contrived and deliberately tortuous promenade architecturale,” to the last phase of his career, such as the analyses of the monastery of La Tourette by Colin Rowe, of the Carpenter Centre by Eduard F. Sekler and William Curtis and by Hashim Sarkis, or of the French Embassy in Brasilia and of the Venice Hospital by Alan Colquhoun, to mention but a few.<sup>8</sup>

What interest us here are the roots of Le Corbusier's architectural promenade and, consequently, its historical references. With regard to history, the literature has highlighted the same sort of references and dialectics between Romantic and Classical models that are also invoked to explain broader aspects of Le Corbusier's design. These references—brought to the fore since Rowe's comparison between the Villa Stein at Garches and Palladio's Villa Malcontenta—range from the Roman based classicism to the French *hôtel particulier* type, and from the aesthetic category of the picturesque to the Athenian Acropolis.<sup>9</sup> These have extended back the debate on the promenade to the Romantic categories of his formative years and Classicizing influences of the early travels, sometimes associating it with particular episodes of those trips. Allen Brooks,

8 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971); idem., *Construire en France, en fer, en béton*, trans. Guy Ballangé, 5th ed. (Paris: Éditions La Villette, 2000); Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal,” (1955), *Perspecta* 8 (1963): 45–54; Yve-Alain Bois, “Sergei M. Eisenstein, Montage and Architecture,” *Assemblage* no. 10 (December 1989): 110–131; idem., “A Picturesque Stroll Around ‘Clara-Clara,’” *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 32–62; Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture and Mass Media* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1994); Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2001); François Penz, “L'Ombre de l'Acropole: la Villa Savoye construite par le cinéma,” in *L'Invention d'un architecte. Le Voyage en Orient de Le Corbusier*, ed. Roberta Amirante et al., XVIIe Rencontre de La Fondation Le Corbusier (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, Éditions de La Villette, 2013), 407–413; Tim Benton, *The Villas of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, 1920–1930*, rev. ed. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007), 42; idem., “Le Corbusier y la promenade architecturale,” *Arquitectura* no. 264–265 (1987): 38–47; Rowe, “La Tourette,” (1961), in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (1976; repr., Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1987), 185–201; Eduard F. Sekler and William Curtis, *Le Corbusier at Work: The Genesis of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978); Hashim Sarkis, “Constants in Motion: Le Corbusier's ‘Rule of Movement’ at the Carpenter Center,” *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 114–125; Alan Colquhoun, “Formal and Functional Interactions: A Study of Two Late Buildings by Le Corbusier,” *Architectural Design* 36 (May 1966): 221–234. For an overview of the architectural promenade in Le Corbusier's works see José Baltanás, *Le Corbusier, Promenades* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gilli, 2005).

9 Rowe, “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,” (1947), in his *Mathematics*, 1–27.



for instance, has attributed its origins to the outer loggia of the cells of the Carthusian monastery of Il Galluzzo in val d’Ema, near Florence (Ema, in short), which he visited in 1907 and 1911, while Jürgen Joedicke has suggested that the access ramp to this building provided Le Corbusier with the prototype for the ramp of the Villa Savoye. Another example is found in Josep Quetglas’s interpretation of the Villa Savoye in terms of the Pompeian houses.<sup>10</sup>

The most widely accepted root of the promenade is the aesthetic category of the picturesque, with special emphasis on the sequential spaces and balanced asymmetrical compositions inherited from Camillo Sitte and, particularly, Auguste Choisy. Sitte’s *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen* (City Design According to Its Artistic Principles), published in 1889, had been an important reading of the young Charles-Edouard Jeanneret in his early twenties, for his research on town planning during the 1910 German sojourn, encouraging a picturesque outlook. As for Choisy, the clue is given by Le Corbusier in his *L’Esprit Nouveau* essays, where he published Choisy’s illustrations of the Acropolis.

In his *Histoire de l’architecture*, Choisy had formalized the theory of the Greek picturesque, according to which the principles of dissymmetry and displacement of axes in the balanced asymmetrical arrangement of the buildings at the Periclean Acropolis resulted from the consideration of the site and constructed a sequence of “tableaux” to be taken in by the spectator. This was seen as the culminating aesthetic achievement of a wider historical phenomenon of intentional sequencing of spaces, in which Egyptian and Hindu temples also partook. Etlin and Jacques Lucan provide the most comprehensive insights into this link.<sup>11</sup> The picturesque trail has been further explored by authors such as Stanislaus von Moos, who has discussed its links with Le Corbusier’s meandering “donkey’s path,” the travelling experience, or the sequential illustrations of Rodolphe Töpffer; Bois and Vidler, who explored the influence of Choisy in both Le Corbusier’s promenade and Eisenstein’s *cinematism*; and David Leatherbar-

10 H. Allen Brooks, *Le Corbusier’s Formative Years: Charles-Edouard Jeanneret at La Chaux-de-Fonds* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), 106; Jürgen Joedicke, “The Ramp as Architectonic Promenade in Le Corbusier’s Work,” *Daidalos* no. 12 (June 15, 1984); Josep Quetglas, “Souvenirs de Pompéi ... Le Corbusier, architecte romain,” *Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine* no. 22–23 (February 2008): 39–58.

11 Auguste Choisy, “Le pittoresque dans l’art grec : parties dissymétriques, pondération des masses,” in *Histoire de l’architecture*; Etlin, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier: The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), 97–115; Jacques Lucan, *Composition, Non-composition: architecture et theories, XIXe – XXe siècles* (Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2009), 349–65. Both books were preceded by a few essays: Etlin, “A Paradoxical Avant-Garde,” *Architectural Review* (January 1987): 21–32; idem., “Le Corbusier, Choisy, and French Hellenism: The Search for a New Architecture,” *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (June 1987): 264–278; Lucan, “The Propylaion of the Acropolis in Athens: An Architectural Mystery,” *Daidalos* no. 15 (March 1985): 42–56; idem., “Tout a commencé là,” in *Le Corbusier, une encyclopédie*, ed. Lucan (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987), 20–25 ; idem., “Athènes et Pise. Deux modèles pour l’espace convexe du plan libre,” *Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine* no. 22–23 (February 2008): 59–78.

row, who has discussed Le Corbusier's free plan, Adolf Loos's *Raumplan*, and Frank Lloyd Wright's *open plan* in the light of their common picturesque roots.<sup>12</sup>

The influence of Classical models, in turn, has been addressed by authors such as Kenneth Frampton, Colquhoun, Kurt Forster, Etlin, or Michael Dennis.<sup>13</sup> Frampton marked a turning point in this respect. In comparing Le Corbusier's entry for the competition for the League of Nations with Hannes Meyer's, Frampton demonstrates that in contrast with Meyer, the machine and the functionalist discourse are ancillary in Le Corbusier's design, rather characterized by its humanist and metaphorical quality. Discussing the access along the axial pathway towards the main entrance of the building, he notes the perceptual ambiguity of the frontalized plans and the space offered to the advancing visitor, alternately compressing frontally and expanding laterally and diagonally. He thus hints at space, shifting from Rowe and Slutzky's conceptual arguments on "phenomenal transparency" to an effective phenomenological experience. Arguing for a hierarchical quality in "Le Corbusier's basic notion of spatial order," he sees in the description of the longitudinal section of the project a sequential ordering of architectural sensations stirred by the rhythm of architectural volumes developing towards the inner space of the auditorium. Thus understood, the architectural

**12** Stanislaus von Moos, "Voyages en Zigzag," in *LC Before LC*, 39-43; Bois, "Montage and Architecture"; Vidler, *Warped Space*; David Leatherbarrow, "The Law of Meander," chap. 11 in *Architecture Oriented Otherwise* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 271-295.

No direct implications of Adolf Loos's *Raumplan* in the interpenetration of spaces of Le Corbusier's free plan have been established so far. Based on Kenneth Frampton's assertions on the influence of Loos in purist architecture, von Moos has suggested an approach via the picturesque arrangement of "constructions" rooted in the influence of the English country house both in Loos and Le Corbusier. Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: a Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1981), 94-95; von Moos, "Le Corbusier et Loos," in *Le Corbusier et l'industrie*, 122-133. In addition, for Loos and Le Corbusier see Max Risselada, ed., *Raumplan Versus Plan Libre* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

As for Wright, his influence in European architects has been traditionally attributed to the two early Berliner publications by the Wasmuth Verlag: *Frank Lloyd Wright: Ausgeführte Bauten* (1910) and *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright* (1911). About the open plan see, for instance, Henry-Russel Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966), 25-26, first published in 1932. Le Corbusier knew the German publications as early as 1915, having mentioned them in a 1915 letter to Auguste Perret (see Jeanneret to Auguste Perret, 30 June 1915). Anthony Alofsin has however argued that, in this early period, Europe had a greater impact on Wright than he had in European architecture. Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years, 1910-1922* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993). Indeed, Wright's influence on Le Corbusier's early work seems to relate to minor formal features. See, for instance, Passanti's association between Wright and some details of the Villa Schowb in Passanti, "Architecture," 95, or the formal connections between some aspects of the Dom-ino housing and Wright's Prairie houses in Jean-Louis Cohen, editor's and translator's notes to Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, trans. John Goodman (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), 327.

**13** Frampton, "The Humanist Versus the Utilitarian Ideal," in *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design*, 1968<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), 109-119; Colquhoun, "Displacement of Concepts in Le Corbusier," in *Essays and Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change*, Oppositions Books (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991), 51-66; Idem., "The Strategies of the Grands Travaux," *Assemblage* no. 4 (October 1987): 66-81; Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*; Kurt Forster, "Antiquity and Modernity in the La Roche-Jeanneret Houses of 1923," *Oppositions* no. 15-16 (Winter/Spring 1979): 131-153; Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*, Graham Foundation Architecture Series (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1986).

promenade envisaged by Le Corbusier could be seen “as the orchestration of a series of psychological states, to be induced by successive changes in volume, light and view.” In metaphorical terms, the progression culminating in the Grande Salle enacted a rite of passage from profane to sacred. In formal terms, the prototype was the Renaissance palace, legitimating Frampton’s use of the concept of *cour d’honneur*.

Colquhoun went farther, explicitly denying a connection between the phenomenal experience of architecture in Le Corbusier and the simultaneity of representation from several points of view. Giedion’s space-time conception of modern architecture, he believes, is alien to Le Corbusier’s concept of the architectural promenade, “which is the temporal experience within a building that has already imprinted itself on the mind as a conceptual and spatial unity, and which seems connected with Le Corbusier’s parallel conception of the dialectical relationship between Platonic form and empirical accident.”<sup>14</sup> Following Frampton’s view, Colquhoun saw in the ceremonial promenade linking the exterior and interior of designs such as those for the League of Nations or the Centrosoyus an attempt to invest the humanist implications of the program with an appropriate character. Participating in the temporal experience of the transition between two phenomenal worlds, the side wings of the League of Nations exemplify Le Corbusier’s tendency to organize surfaces forming a series of planes at right angles to the line of movement of the observer. This tendency, Colquhoun adds, is first found in the 1914 Dom-ino schemes, being recognizable in the articulated bars of the housing à redents (setbacks), where von Moos has read a resonance of the way the volumes of the palace of Versailles advance and retreat. But while the promenade is here associated with a Classical sequence of planes, Colquhoun also recognizes the picturesque qualities derived from Sitte and the Garden City movement, establishing a counterpoint between static buildings and free circulation.<sup>15</sup>

The conjunction of Classical order and the picturesque qualities of free movement is further explored by Colquhoun in two conceptual procedures through which Le Corbusier re-elaborates architectural self-referential concepts in order to create a new modern architecture. One is the use of Choisy’s principles as a means to accommodate the theoretical models—i.e. Classical order—to the specific conditions of local sites. This is the case of the balanced asymmetry of the extension plan of the League of Nations, where Le Corbusier attempts to conform the side wings to existing buildings and road alignments, or the volumes of the access of the Cité de Refuge, where the sequence *cour d’honneur* (forecourt) and *corps de logis* (principal block) of the French

14 Colquhoun, “Displacement of Concepts,” 55.

15 Idem., “Grands Travaux,” 125; von Moos, *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis*, rev. ed. (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009). Originally published as *Le Corbusier, Elemente einer Synthese* (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1968).



*hôtel* is called upon to construct a “series of initiatory acts necessary before entering the inner sanctum of the building,” simultaneously incorporating the Greek picturesque to respond to the accidental circumstances of the site.<sup>16</sup> The second conceptual procedure, with obvious connections with the former, consists of the displacement of distinct self-referential concepts of architectural tradition and the subsequent attempt to resolve the conflict of opposite models. These concepts range from the notion of frontality—rooted in the concept of facade and operating as a critical boundary separating two phenomenological distinct types of space—to elements of the “high” tradition of architecture and of industrial buildings. The Villa Stein illustrates the view. On one level, its plan is conceived with reference to eighteenth-century *hôtel particulier* design by means of *poché*, codified in the teaching of the Beaux-Arts. Whereas the *poché* system provided a segregation of services and circulation areas, the secondary spaces of the free plans of Le Corbusier’s villas of the 1920s are no longer concealed, rather becoming an integral part of the architectural experience. On another level, in transforming the *poché* spatial planning into the free plan, the curved and convex surfaces adopt the principle of distribution of the “equipment” of the modern industrial world, purely arranged on the basis of practical necessity. In this process, the reasons for practical organization become part of the aesthetic experience in which “the elements of order and the elements of disorder (or chance) achieve a momentary equilibrium.”<sup>17</sup>

The House of the Tragic Poet, in Pompeii—which Jeanneret visited in 1911—is for Colquhoun the paradigmatic example of Le Corbusier’s dialectic interaction of ideal order (pure form) and pragmatic order (function). There, Jeanneret could find “a primary formal law brought into collision with utility,” a pure form given meaning by “the elements derived from human life.”<sup>18</sup> Forster found in it the explanation for the asymmetries introduced in the initial symmetrical U-shape scheme of the Villas La Roche-Jeanneret, in which Le Corbusier reworked the axial development of Roman architecture and the French *hôtel* type. This particular case provides an early connection between the picturesque and classicist schemes and the roots of Le Corbusier’s architectural conception of the 1920s, based on a regular envelope arranged by concave and convex surfaces—which Lucan has aptly traced back to Pisa, Athens, and Sitté’s discourse on urban planning.<sup>19</sup>

16 Colquhoun, “Grands Travaux,” 133-134, 152.

17 Idem., “Displacement of Concepts.” On the concept of façade see also Colquhoun’s “Rules, Realism, and History,” in *Architectural Criticism*, 67-74.

18 Idem., “Architecture and Engineering: Le Corbusier and the Paradox of Reason,” in *Modernity and the Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays 1980-1987* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991), 89-120, esp. 110.

19 Forster, “Antiquity and Modernity.” Problems related to the acquisition of lots of the La Roche-Jeanneret project led the initial U-shape scheme, determining the axiality of approach, to be reduced to the built asymmetrical plan.

Taking Colquhoun's clue, Forster explicitly implicated the bodily sense of space in the dialectics of function and aesthetics. In noting that Ozenfant and Jeanneret's purist paintings anticipate the curvilinear enclosures of the purist villas accommodating smaller spaces, such as bathrooms, closets, stairs, or spaces like the library in the Ozenfant studio, Forster identified an immediate and psychological association between the body and bodily movement and the curved surfaces generated by the equipment needed for comfort in architecture. Quoting Ozenfant and Jeanneret, he noted that, in purist painting, the "objets-type" portray the most specific forms of existing utilitarian objects that serve the most direct human uses, which, as argued in *La Peinture moderne*, are like extensions of man's limbs. Similarly, beyond the abstract pictorial nature of the architectural plans, it is the bodily engaged function of circulation, bathtubs or bidets—shaped to the curvature of human limbs—that generate curvilinear surfaces, escaping the rectilinear confinement of the regular envelope. Like purist painting, where the abstract setting of "objets-type" establishes a connection with the viewer's world, positively exploring the conflict between utilitarian object and pictorial construct, so purist architecture establishes a bodily engaged aesthetic appreciation for plastic forms within space via the utilitarian. In so doing, the dialectics of curved surfaces and pristine geometry establishes an "experiential distinction between the organic form of the human body and the geometric structure of spatial abstraction," that is, the experience of the "opposition of conceptualized space and bodily presence," in which "space comes to represent abstract totality" and the "equipment the reality of need."<sup>20</sup>

In arguing that the confrontation between human referents (the inner convex and concave surfaces) and the Absolute (the Cartesian geometry of the envelope) displays a mediated sense of contrast of life with the absolute categories generated by the timeless abstractions of the human mind, Forster is equally raising a problem of meaning. The assumption of a meaningful or philosophical dimension of Le Corbusier's architecture is first sustained by the idealist, symbolic, and humanist nature of his work, which criticism has long recognized not only in him but in the early European Modern Movement in general.<sup>21</sup> A particularly relevant work about Le Corbusier is Paul Venable Turner's, who called for a shift of focus on the approach to his thinking through the analysis of his early readings, showing that his attitude toward architecture was fundamentally intellectual and "idealistic," and that for him architecture was above all

For a comprehensive survey of the design process see Benton, *Villas of Le Corbusier*, 46-77. Lucan, *Composition, Non-composition*, 367-382.

<sup>20</sup> Forster, "Antiquity and Modernity," 142-143.

<sup>21</sup> A key contribution is William H. Jordy, "The Symbolic Essence of Modern European Architecture of the Twenties and Its Continuing Influence," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no. 3 (October 1963): 177-187.

an expression of ideas and transcendent principles.<sup>22</sup>

Criticism has equally attributed a philosophical or symbolic content to the promenade. I am thinking of Elisabeth Blum's *Le Corbusiers Wege: Wie das Zauberwerk in Gang gesetzt wird* and Flora Samuel's *Le Corbusier and the Architectural Promenade*.<sup>23</sup> Blum discusses the architectural promenade in the light of Le Corbusier's idealist background. Inspired by Turner's book, and drawing particular attention to the influence of Édouard Schuré and Henry Provensal on Le Corbusier, Blum focuses on the symbolic and metaphysical dimension of "being on the road" (Auf-dem-Wege-Seins). Calling upon these early influences, she sees the road or path conception (Wegkonzeption) as an expression of Le Corbusier's deep philosophical, moral, and religious outlook. The theme of the road (Wegethematik) is explored in three main topics and supported by the analysis of some examples: architecture as art, discussed through the symbolism of the several events along the architectural promenade of the La Roche house; architecture as a means of realizing the principle of Cosmic Integration of man and building, reflected in the 1929 South American urban plans and the Mundaneum; architecture as a means of education, expressed in the Musée Mondial, where the ascending promenade is a symbol of the "road to knowledge." Samuel, who focuses on the formula of an ascending narrative that reconnects man with nature at the top, expands Blum's view of the educational role of architecture and her focus on the details through which the meaning of the promenade is constructed step by step (see Blum's approach to the Villa La Roche). She identifies a pattern based on a series of stages that aim at initiating people "into the pleasures of *savoir habiter*," constructing an Orphic initiatory route, a symbolic universe similar to the one discussed by J. K. Birksted.<sup>24</sup>

To draw these contributions together, criticism has shown that the architectural promenade is closely associated with Le Corbusier's multilayered architectural discourse—from practical requirements to aesthetic experience, and philosophical and symbolic dimensions; that it is implicated in the reconciliation of opposite concepts of architectural tradition ranging from Romanticism to Classicism; that its engagement with modern aesthetics is framed by a primary phenomenological dimension; and that it harks back to Le Corbusier's formative years.

In this work, I broadly share these interpretations and concerns. But my understanding and interests are different in one significant aspect. Whereas these accounts roughly associate the concept of the promenade with the temporal experience within

22 Paul Venable Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier* (New York: Garland, 1977).

23 Elisabeth Blum, *Le Corbusiers Wege: Wie Das Zauberwerk in Gang Gesetzt Wird* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2001); Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier and the Architectural Promenade* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010). In addition see Samuel, *Le Corbusier in Detail* (Oxford: Elsevier/Architectural Press, 2007), 127–168.

24 J. K. Birksted, *Le Corbusier and the Occult* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2009).

a building and the step-by-step episodes along the path, my focus is on a larger experiential pattern. Its expression in buildings, I think, is part of the wider experience that constitutes Le Corbusier's ordering code, meant to be eventually expanded to the urban and territorial scale; and this code is an expression of his Romantic project of merging function, aesthetics, and philosophical world-view in a single daily lived experience. This Romantic project, it must be added, must be looked at through the connections between Le Corbusier's conception of the city and the nineteenth-century urban and architectural strategies aimed at controlling social behavior.<sup>25</sup> Let us then inquire into the Romantic nature of Le Corbusier's ordering code before discussing the aesthetic categories involved it.

**THE ROMANTIC LEGACY** In accepting the above, one ought to uncouple the *idea* from the *image* and accept a wider definition of "architectural promenade." The parallel between the Villa Savoye and the Ville Contemporaine suggests that the concept underlying the term goes beyond the architectural realm; and indeed, the *idea* is more often detached from the term than associated with it. Le Corbusier applied the term twice in his writings, first in 1930 to describe the experience of the unfolding spaces of the Maison La Roche, and then in the 1934 description of the Ville Savoye.<sup>26</sup> It will suffice to compare the 1934 description with the similar one in the chapter "Le Plan de la maison moderne" of *Précisions*, where the depiction of the Ville Savoye is structured by the same temporal experience under the broader notion of "circulation," in order to measure the extent to which the use of the term is merely incidental to the concept.<sup>27</sup>

The question we might now reflect on is if "circulation"—which Le Corbusier often used—embodies the phenomenological dimension of the "promenade." If we return to the chapter in *Précisions*, there is evidence that, for him, "circulation" incorporates

25 On the connections between Le Corbusier's conception of the city and of the house as a *machine* and the nineteenth-century ideologies on social reform and regulation of the city see Manfredo Tafuri, "'Machine et Mémoire': The City in the Work of Le Corbusier," in *Le Corbusier*, ed. H. Allen Brooks (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 203-218; Brian Brace Taylor, *Le Corbusier: The City of Refuge, Paris 1929/33* (Chicago-London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987); idem., *Le Corbusier et Pessac: 1914-1928*, 2 vols. (Paris: Spadem, 1972).

26 "Cette seconde maison [La Roche] sera donc un peu comme une *promenade architecturale*. On entre : le spectacle architectural s'offre de suite au regard ; on suit un itinéraire et les perspectives se développent avec une grande variété ; on joue avec l'afflux de la lumière éclairant les murs ou créant des pénombres. Les baies ouvrent des perspectives sur l'extérieur où l'on retrouve l'unité architecturale." Le Corbusier, *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret: Œuvre complète, 1910-1921*, vol. 1 (Zurich: Girsberger, 1937), 60. First published in German as *Le Corbusier und Pierre Jeanneret : Ihr gesamtes Werk von 1910-1929* (Zurich: Verlag Dr. H. Girsberger, 1930).

27 Le Corbusier, "Le Plan de la maison moderne," in *Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme* (Paris: G. Crès, 1930), 123-133. The publication of the South American lectures is contemporary with the text of the Maison La Roche. Among the numerous examples in which the idea of a temporal experience is detached from the term of "architectural promenade" see; idem., *Entretien avec les étudiants des écoles d'architecture* (Paris: Denoël, 1943); Idem., "If I Had to Teach You Architecture," *Focus* no. 1 (Summer 1938): 5-12; idem., "Unité," in "Le Corbusier," *Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, special issue (1948), 44; idem., *Le Modulor*, 75.

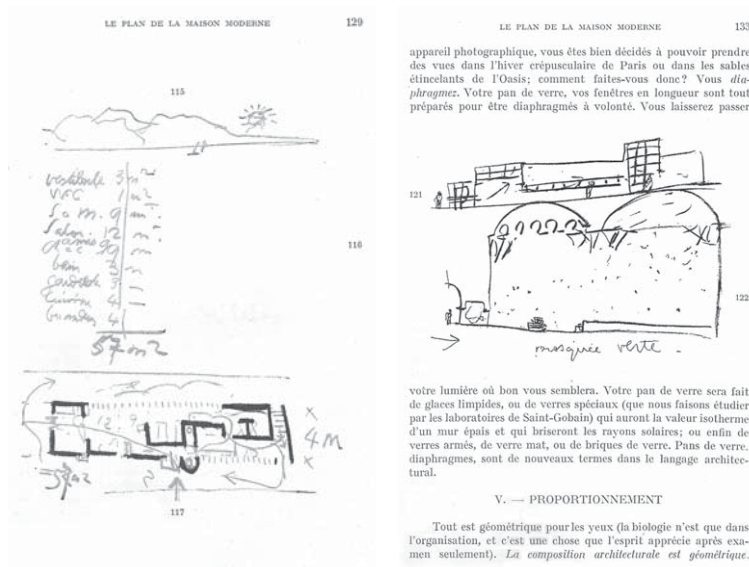


FIG. 5 Le Corbusier. Petite Villa, 1922. Sketch. Page from *Précisions*.

FIG. 6 Le Corbusier. Petite Villa and Green Mosque. Cross-sections. Page from *Précisions*.

both a practical and an experiential content. While the Villa Savoye concludes the chapter exemplifying the synthesis of the main aspects of *le plan de la maison moderne*, two sections in particular implicate the notion of the promenade. The section “Circulation” considers the 1923 *petite villa* in Vevey, intermingling arguments on the dimension and functional arrangement of space with its temporal experience (fig. 5). Starting with the argument that “tout est circulation dans l’architecture et dans l’urbanisme,” Le Corbusier concludes:

“Il serait facile de multiplier ces exemples que les problèmes quotidiens nous proposent si l’on prend l’habitude de se promener au bout de son crayon, pas à pas, en réfléchissant bien aux fonctions par lesquelles notre habitant trouvera du plaisir à habiter sa maison.”<sup>28</sup>

The section “Composition” clarifies the link between the aesthetic enjoyment of architectural forms and bodily displacement, discussing architectural composition through the example of the unfolding volumes of the Green mosque, in Bursa, as experienced by the *promeneur* (fig. 6).<sup>29</sup> For Le Corbusier, then, “circulation” condenses the practical and aesthetic qualities in a single experience to be provided by the modern dwelling. Moreover, the example of the Green mosque—where, we will see, Le Corbusier lived a deep emotional experience—and the confrontation of the plan of the *petite maison* with the mountain’s profile and setting sun, indicate that “circulation” also encompasses an emotional or spiritual experience.

It seems thus reasonable to accept that, for Le Corbusier, “architectural promenade” and “circulation” share the same essential semantic content. It is the affinities

<sup>28</sup> Idem., *Précisions*, 128, 132.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 132-133.



between such apparently distinct words that lead us to reposition the concept of “architectural promenade” within Le Corbusier’s Romantic education, the dialectics of spirit and matter that characterizes it, and the subsequent intent to reconcile an idealistic worldview with a positivist one.

The Romantic legacy is suggested by the concept of “circulation” itself. The growing concern with circulation in architecture is associated with the growth of cities after the Industrial Revolution and the multitudes of new building types that spread in the course of the nineteenth century. Through the influence of contemporary taxonomic concerns of science with classification, it acquired the status of architectural category. Adrian Forty reminds us that the term was borrowed from physiology and that it only became related to bodily movement within or around a building in the late-nineteenth century. In France, for instance, it replaced the focus on the Beaux-Arts’ *distribution*. Yet, it did not have the practical connotation that it has today.<sup>30</sup> Charles Garnier’s claim that a program like the *Opéra* in Paris demanded to be “parcouru” is instructive<sup>31</sup>: “circulation” was being absorbed by the conceptual procedure of the Beaux-Arts’ *distribution*, in which the experience of the general effect of architecture displayed in *la marche* along the sequential arrangement of rooms was a main parameter of evaluation of architecture. It therefore condensed practical, aesthetic, and ceremonial aspects. This took place in tandem with the nineteenth-century French debate on the Gothic, which, as we will discuss, involved the interaction of aesthetic and existential experiences.

It need scarcely be mentioned that the bodily sentient response to space and its existential dimension are, at least, as old as architecture. These concerns awoke with the Romantic revolution, nurtured by the eighteenth century theories of the beautiful and the Sublime, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s theories on the sentiment of existence—reconciling the image of the self-sufficient individual and its communal identity—and by the growing concern with primitive rituals. The interest in primitive rituals, with obvious links with the contemporary archaeological discoveries in the East, expresses the Romantic quest to overcome the Cartesian division of spirit and matter, bringing the association between corporal expression and spiritual experience to the realm of the arts and life through men like Denis Diderot and Arthur Schopenhauer. For them, bodily movement simultaneously constitutes a subject of knowledge and a means to achieve knowledge.

Early inklings of these discourses may be found in the spatial sense of self explored by French neoclassical architects such as Etienne-Louis Boullée or the interest

30 Adrian Forty, *Works and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 87–94.

31 See David Van Zanten, “Le Système des Beaux-Arts,” *Architecture d’aujourd’hui* no. 182 (December 1975): 99.

in the aesthetic experience associated with walking across columnar church architecture in the eighteenth-century debate on the Graeco-Gothic ideal in France.<sup>32</sup> This had obvious consequences in the nineteenth-century Gothic revival, sharing the same essential dialectics of aesthetic and spiritual experience with the paradigmatic contemporary enthusiasm for the (profusely explored) imagery of the Panathenaea procession that arose with the “discovery” of the Athenian Acropolis. At the theoretical level, the most significant contribution is perhaps that of the nineteenth-century German theories of *Einfühlung* (empathy) and their concerns with the perceived bodily movement through which form and space are experienced. August Schmarsow, for instance, attempted a history of architecture based on space, mainly focusing on the interior of pilgrimage temples and the choreography of movement through them.<sup>33</sup> One of the aftermaths of these theories is found in early-twentieth-century art historians like Paul Frankl, for whom “circulation” meant both common human activity and the experience of spatiality.<sup>34</sup>

The best nineteenth-century expression of the Romantic project is perhaps Friedrich Nietzsche’s and Richard Wagner’s search for a cultural renewal liberating modern civilization from the Enlightenment through a *Gesamtkunstwerk*—a “total work of art” fusing ritual, representation, and life. These theories, contemporary with the birth of phenomenology, are expressed in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century arts in general, from the search for a universal language in modern dance capable of transposing representation into embodiment, to the work of men such as Eadweard Muybridge on animal and human locomotion, or to empirical investigations of the mechanics of movement such as Jules Marey’s *Animal Mechanism* (1873) and Paul Souriau’s *L’Esthétique du mouvement* (1889), reflecting the Romantic quest in their scientific and aesthetic conjunctions. While Muybridge was interested in the artistic and technical aspects of photography, Souriau deals with body movement both as a subject of aesthetic beauty and as the means of perception and aesthetic experience.

During his education, Le Corbusier became acquainted with many of these ideas. The fact that these reappear in his concept of “circulation,” then, should not surprise us. This indicates that the “architectural promenade” (and “circulation”) is a fundamentally Romantic expression—a verbal manifestation of Le Corbusier’s broader Romantic project. To acknowledge this is to accept that a fundamental notion lingered in Le Corbusier: the confidence in and the quest for a modern renewed society and

32 See Etlin, *Symbolic Space*, 88-123; idem., “Aesthetics and the Spatial Sense of the Self,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-19.

33 See Mitchell W. Schwarzer, “The Emergence of Architectural Space: August Schmarsow’s Theory of ‘Raumgestaltung,’” *Assemblage* no. 15 (Aug. 1991): 48-61

34 Forty, *Works and Buildings*, 92-93.

the belief that it would be attained by overcoming the schism of spirit and matter. It means that the practical, aesthetic, and symbolic aspects involved in the architectural promenade must not be considered independently, but as integral parts of Le Corbusier's attempt to merge daily life with aesthetic and existential experience; also, that this attitude is not confined to architecture, but concerns architecture, the city, and the landscape. It is through this wider lens that I will approach the problem of the spatiotemporal experience in Le Corbusier, and through which I will try to re-couple the *idea* and the *image*.

This is therefore a work written in the belief that, for Le Corbusier, the *promenade architecturale* is so basic a concept that it dissolves and resolves into the variety of factors that inform his work, from formal, symbolical, or philosophical. Thus understood, it comes without surprise that he felt no urge to over-construct a discourse around it. It is my conviction, though, that his work cannot be entirely understood without the concept. And a proper understanding of the *promenade*, in turn, will necessarily probe into those factors.

**AESTHETIC CATEGORIES** It remains to briefly consider the aesthetic categories through which Le Corbusier codified the experiential pattern. While Choisy, Sitte, or the French *hôtel* type helped Le Corbusier to explore the phenomenological dimension of his buildings, this—I suggested—partakes in the larger experiential code constructed upon the bodily sense of space and the existential sense of *being-in-the-world*, to use the Heideggerian terminology. Such a construction extends back to the dialectics of the picturesque and the Sublime that Le Corbusier absorbed during his formative years.

Etlin has noted that nineteenth-century architects used the picturesque as a conceptual tool to translate the Romantic quest for a modern architectural style, capable of expressing a renewed cultural life, into architectural form.<sup>35</sup> Francesco Passanti has called attention to Le Corbusier's lifelong preoccupation with the Sublime both in architecture and urban planning. Le Corbusier became acquainted with the category of the Sublime at an early stage through Charles Blanc—for whom the Sublime refers to the immeasurable and mysterious aspects of nature which evoke infinity and the divine—and from him he absorbed the idea that, to attain the Sublime, architecture should reproduce nature's most imposing aspects, combining large scale and the absolute character of geometry, as in Egyptian architecture.<sup>36</sup> In the *Ville Contemporaine* the pyramidal composition of the plan rivaling with the distant ridge, and its axes

<sup>35</sup> Etlin, *The Romantic Legacy*, xii.

<sup>36</sup> Passanti, "Aesthetic Dimension"; idem., "Toscane," in *L'Italie de Le Corbusier*, ed. Marida Talamona, Rencontre de la Fondation Le Corbusier (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, Éditions de La Villette, 2010), 18-27.



pointing to it, relate to the aesthetic category of the Sublime.

Blanc built his discourse on the Sublime upon Hegelian aesthetics. For Hegel, the Sublime manifests itself through the opposition of infinite and finite, that is, of the absolute and the phenomenal—an opposition relating to the unity of spirit and matter. Resting upon the “double relationship of substance, as meaning, to the phenomenal world,” the artistic expression of the sublime lies in “the attempt to express the infinite,” raising the substance “above the single phenomenon in which it is to acquire representation.” This dialectics of absolute and phenomenal is associated with a third category: symbolic form. Art expresses the Sublime through strictly symbolic form, the content of which is the “universal dialectic of life.” The prototype of symbolic art is to be found in the “prodigious crystals” of the Egyptian pyramids.<sup>37</sup>

Le Corbusier’s experiential code proposes a lived experience disclosing the Absolute via the phenomenal, with symbolic forms mediating between the bodily sense of space and the sense of being-in-the-world. In constructing a mental experience of the approach by plane, the diorama of the Ville Contemporaine opposes conceptual order and bodily presence, defining an experiential pattern that relates to an experience of the Absolute via the phenomenal. Its pyramidal silhouette rivaling with the far ridge and the straight axes pointing to it relate to the Sublime, but also to the pantheistic dimension of the experienced architecture. So for the Villa Savoye; its inner space discloses the Absolute through the *experiential distinction between the organic form of the human body and the geometric structure of spatial abstraction*, as Forster has cogently shown for the Villa La Roche, but also in the mediated contrast of life, geometric form, and nature, be it along the approach or from the roof terrace. It is ultimately in this broader interaction between the phenomenal and the absolute and the blurred frontiers between life and ritual that we must position the experiential dimension of Le Corbusier’s work and, subsequently, the dialectics of Romantic and Classical concepts.

**CHAPTER STRUCTURE** The task that this work proposes is to bring to light the deeper layers of this dialectical interaction. For that I will examine chronologically Le Corbusier’s most prolific formative years.

Chapter 1 considers the early works of the School of Arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds. The analysis of the Villa Fallet—Le Corbusier’s first architectural design—reveals an intentional exploitation of an experiential dimension to which one can trace back the paradigmatic pattern of an ascending architectural promenade. His student works from those years will show that the roots of this pattern are to be found in the experience of

<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1988), 1:350, 356, 362-65.

the Jura Mountains, understood in the light of his Ruskinian education. In aesthetic terms, this pattern entails a dialectics between the categories of the picturesque and the Sublime; in symbolic terms, it expresses Jura regionalist values, framed by the Rousseauian myth of the Virtuous Helveti. Upon this basic pattern of an ascending promenade, which he had crystallized during his school years in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Jeanneret then layered the many intellectual discourses that he was exposed to during his travels of the following years; and, through this layering, the pattern acquired, at once, broader philosophical meaning and sharper architectural specificity. The next chapters will describe this process of layering.

Chapter 2 spans the 1907 trip to Italy and the following sojourn in Vienna. The section on Italy considers the influence of the experiential pattern of the Jura landscape in the comprehensive understanding of architecture and landscape in the most significant episodes of the itinerary. This period marks the beginning of a shift, from the Ruskinian view of architecture conceived by analogy with the proceedings of nature to large-scale architectural expression in terms of Hegelian aesthetics. The section on Vienna focuses on the decisive theoretical influence of the reading of two books by the French writer Edouard Schuré. These awoke Le Corbusier's awareness of the main themes of German and French Romanticism, from the symbolic meaning of architecture to the quest for a modern architectural style capable of expressing a renewed society. It is from Schuré that Jeanneret absorbed the contemporary evolutionary theories of art history, through which he first became interested in the Orient; ultimately, this explains the 1911 *voyage d'Orient*.

Chapter 3 considers the Parisian sojourn in 1908-1909. The dialectic of rationalism and idealism provides the unifying thread of the discussion, through which I attempt to show that Le Corbusier absorbed them not as opposites but as complementary concepts. I will first focus on Le Corbusier's readings, showing that the French discourse on the Gothic merges rationalism with idealism in its ultimate quest for a modern architectural expression. This establishes the background to Jeanneret's interpretation of Notre-Dame, where, I will suggest, Jeanneret saw rationalism as an objective means to a subjective experience involving bodily and existential senses of space. I will then shift to his collaboration with Perret, suggesting that he incorporated these experiences in the interpretation of Perret's Classicist design, integrating them with the concept of "la marche" and a new vision of the city. A last short section considers the conjunction of Classicism and Romanticism in his interpretation of Versailles.

Chapter 4 deals with the German sojourn in 1910-1911. Through a discussion of the 1910 project for the Ateliers d'art I suggest that, by the time he left for Germany, Jeanneret had incorporated the French discourse on Symbolist art and the "primitive." I then argue that he absorbed the contemporary German discourse on form partially

through the Sittesque discourse on town planning. I also consider the influence of men such as William Ritter, Jacques Dalcroze, and Adolph Appia, and the debate on the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Through all of these categories, Le Corbusier constructed a mental framework through which he would later approach the Athenian Acropolis, which he saw as an archetypal experience of the natural and the manmade.

Finally, chapter 5 examines how the journey to the East of 1911 acted as a mediating key between Jeanneret's earlier education and Le Corbusier's ordering code, in which the temporal experience of architecture and landscape will become the central medium to articulate his concerns along the itinerary.

Throughout the work I will occasionally suggest some of the consequences of these formative years in Le Corbusier's work, keeping these connections at a fairly general level. To fully develop them would require another study. My primary concern has been to sketch a wider way to consider the architectural promenade, hoping to broaden our understanding of the experiential dimension in Le Corbusier's work and its close links with his technical and formal explorations and with his philosophical background. Such an attempt contributes to the clarification of the complex dialectics between rationalism and idealism in his architectural and urban design. Turner has shown that Le Corbusier's attitude toward architecture was fundamentally intellectual and "idealistic." This work seeks to show that this idealism was first and foremost understood in experiential terms. Architectural form was essentially suited to display the meaning of modern man's daily experience, framed by a philosophical world-view, and translated into emotion and experience.



## 1 LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS, 1902-1907

Discussion of the roots of the architectural promenade must begin with the early period in La Chaux-de-Fonds, particularly with Charles-Edouard Jeanneret's first architectural work—the Villa Fallet. Jeanneret was admitted in the “Classe de gravure d'ornements” at the École d'art appliqué à l'industrie of La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1902, founded by the Société des patrons Graveurs in 1870.<sup>1</sup> He stayed three years in the regular program (1902-1905). After that he enrolled in the two-year “Cours Supérieur” (1905-1907), founded in 1905 by Charles L'Eplattenier, who aimed at giving education on a wide range of artistic activities in order to create a regional style of the Jura in the contemporary ideal of a “total work of art.” The Cours Supérieur was thus going beyond the watchmaking-oriented program established by the “Société.”<sup>2</sup> L'Eplattenier's adoption of the Art Nouveau's discourse on the social role of art, in the context of the 1900 industrialized La Chaux-de-Fonds, would have considerable consequences for the school, for the development of his teaching program in general, and for the young Jeanneret in particular. L'Eplattenier became Jeanneret's predominant influence and close adviser, convincing him to become an architect. “Learning by doing” was L'Eplattenier's teaching method. So he searched for real assignments to fulfill the two-

1 The aim of the École d'art—to give instruction in drawing in order to provide artisans to watchmaking industry—followed the Swiss tradition of art schools, the official policy of which was to provide support for manufacturers and industry rather than to educate painters, sculptors or architects. Emigration to France, Germany or Italy was required for those who wanted to study art beyond the elementary level. This was the case of Léopold Robert, Jean-Pierre Saint-Ours, François Diday, Gleyre, Böcklin or Eugène Grasset, to mention but a few. For the art school of La Chaux-de-Fonds see the annual report of the school of 1906-1907, quoted in Mary Patricia May Sekler, *The Early Drawings of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) 1902-1908* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 35. On the tradition of the Swiss artistic education see William Hauptman, “The Swiss Artist and the European Context,” in *From Liotard to Le Corbusier: 200 Years of Swiss Painting, 1730-1930*, ed. Hans Ulrich Jost, Brandon Brame Fortune and William Hauptman, exh. cat. (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1988), 40-41; Anne de Herdt's, introduction to *Dessin Genevois, de Liotard à Hodler*, exh. cat. (Geneva: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1984), 15-58, focused on the case of the École de Dessin of Geneva; Luisa Martina Colli, *Arte, artigianato e tecnica nella poetica di Le Corbusier* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1982), 90.

2 Within the context of the utilitarian purpose of art, which echoed the spirit of the several branches of public education, training in drawing had a key role in artistic education. Charles L'Eplattenier was appointed professor at the art school in 1898, where he became a dominant figure. He taught the courses of “dessin decorative” and “composition decorative” covering all areas of instruction. L'Eplattenier, who had been forced into cultural migration, studied art briefly in Budapest and then in Paris, first at the École des Arts Décoratifs and later at the École des Beaux-Arts. In 1896 he travelled to London, Holland, Belgium and Munich, the main centres of Art Nouveau, becoming a follower of Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement. He was also aware of the German regional movements (*Heimatkunst*) and its influence in Lausanne through Alphonse Laverrière, the most prominent anti-academic architect of that city, who would later promote *L'Œuvre* following the Werkbund model. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 24-25; Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 39-42; Colli, *Arte, artigianato e tecnica*, 93-96; idem., “Jeanneret et l'École d'art,” in Musée des Beaux-Arts et Musée d'Histoire de La Chaux-de-Fonds, *La Chaux-de-Fonds and Jeanneret (avant Le Corbusier)* (Niederteufen: A. Niggli, 1983), 61. For L'Eplattenier see also Anouk Hellmann, “Charles L'Eplattenier, de l'observation à la composition décorative,” in *Le Corbusier, La Suisse, Les Suisses*, XIIIe Rencontre de la Fondation Le Corbusier (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, Éditions de La Villette, 2006), 68-81.

year program of the “Cours Supérieur.” Some commissions were actually carried out, such as a music room to be added to Mathey-Doret’s house, the decoration of the chapel of Fontainemelon, and the Villa Fallet (fig. 7).

Louis-Édouard Fallet was a small contractor of watch manufacturing and a supporter of the art school, who assigned the design of his house to the students of the “Cours Supérieur,” giving L’Eplattenier the chance to show the work of his first year teaching project. Designed and built between 1906 and 1907, the Villa Fallet was to be the product of the art school’s apprenticeship, a collective expression of the new Jurasian style comprising several arts to be synthesized in architecture in the ideal of a “total work of art.” Several students participated in the decoration, Jeanneret being responsible for the architectural design. The lack of experience on construction was to be solved with the help of René Chapallaz, an architect, friend of L’Eplattenier, whom he asked to play the role of master builder.<sup>3</sup> Although being the product of a collective work involving both the school and Chapallaz, the credits of the architectural design were attributed to Jeanneret by Chapallaz himself.<sup>4</sup>

Because it was not useful to his politics of self-promotion as an avant-garde architect, Le Corbusier never published this house. Beyond the 1963 brief analysis of Jeanneret’s early villas by Etienne Chavanne and Michel Laville, the interest in the villa mainly arose after Le Corbusier’s death, together with the awareness of the importance of his early education to tackle the complexity and richness of his work. Several scholars have discussed the house, mainly focusing on the relation between its ornament and the search for a regionalist style. The main characteristics of its design have been identified as: the geometric abstraction of the ornamental motifs inspired by the local natural elements, reflecting L’Eplattenier’s teachings based on Owen Jones, John Ruskin, or Eugène Grasset; the neomedieval flavor conveyed by the rusticated base, exposed timber and south hipped gable, in which the influence of Viollet-le-Duc has

3 The set of plans of the Villa Fallet were registered at the Travaux Public during 1906 and by August 1907 the house was finished. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 71-72n62, 86-87. Chapallaz often collaborated with L’Eplattenier in his project to create a regional style. He assisted L’Eplattenier in the design of his own house, and it was with him that he would sign the project for the Hôtel des Postes in 1904, their first architectural manifest of the “Style Sapin,” the regional Art Nouveau movement of La Chaux-de-Fonds. On Jeanneret and Chapallaz see Emery, “Chapallaz versus Jeanneret,” in Musée des Beaux-Arts et Musée d’Histoire de La Chaux-de-Fonds, *La Chaux-de-Fonds and Jeanneret (avant Le Corbusier)* (Niederteufen: A. Niggli, 1983), 23-24. For the *Style Sapin* see Helen Bieri Thomson, ed., *Le Style sapin à La Chaux-de-Fonds : une expérience Art Nouveau* (La Chaux-de-Fonds and Paris: Somogy, 2006).

4 See Brooks, *Formative Years*, 71n61 and n62, 84-85; Geoffrey Baker, *The Creative Search: The Formative Years of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret* (London: E & FN Spon, 1996), 58n 43. As I will further argue, Jeanneret’s authorship is supported by the comparison of the Villa Fallet’s design and cases such as L’Eplattenier’s house and the collective project for Matthey-Doret’s music room. This is also substantiated by Chapallaz’s work from the same period. When consulting the René Chapallaz’s archive at the *Bibliothèque de la Ville* of La Chaux-de-Fonds, it became clear to me that Chapallaz had no direct influence in Jeanneret’s formal decisions, and that his role must have been restricted to technical issues. In this respect see also Brooks, *Formative Years*, 85; idem., “Le Corbusier’s Formative Years at La Chaux-de-Fonds,” in *Le Corbusier*, ed. H. Allen Brooks (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 29.



FIG. 7 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. View from south-west, n.d.

been considered; the influence of regional architecture, associated with the search for the roots of a Swiss regional art within the local traditions under the influence of the German *Heimatkunst* (Regional Art); the influence of bourgeois villas from the beginning of the century, codified for the English land houses by Hermann Muthesius's *Das Englische Haus* (1903-05), mainly visible in the vertical separation of services and the rooms' independence, and in the double-height hall with wooden stairs. With regard to this last aspect, Tim Benton has suggested the influence of Chapallaz, who had introduced an Arts and Crafts domestic style much influenced by Muthesius to the watchmaking community of Tavannes.<sup>5</sup>

These interpretations agree on the notion that the villa's extensive decoration constituted an attempt to express local values of the regional environment, such as indigenous vegetation. Such expression involved an ornamental iconography with local symbolic meaning. It was towards this end that L'Eplattenier's classes were oriented and, as Sekler has shown, the ornamental motifs of the house are three-dimensional versions of the bi-dimensional decorative patterns that Jeanneret explored in L'Eplattenier's classes.

One among these arguments interests us particularly, which sees the façades as being conceived as an echo of the surrounding natural environment through the figurative suggestion of a fir tree: the triangular shape of the gable and cross-gable, as well as the roof projections and bracket supports, provide the branched portion of the tree; the vertical elements of the ground-floor walls provide the trunk; and the cellar's

<sup>5</sup> The main sources are: Etienne Chavanne and Michel Laville, "Les Premières constructions de Le Corbusier en Suisse," *Devoir avec prix de l'École Polytechnique Fédérale*, 1963, later published as "Les Premières constructions de Le Corbusier," *Werk* no. 12 (1963), 483-488; von Moos, *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis*, 7; Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 108-129; Colli, *Arte, artigianato e tecnica*, 85-86, 96-98; Frank Russell, ed., *Le Corbusier, Early Works by Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris* (London: Academy and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Gubler, "Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, 1887-1917, ou l'accès à la pratique architecturale," in Lucan, *Encyclopédie*, 223-224; Benton, "Villa Fallet, La Chaux-de-Fonds," in *Le Corbusier, Architect of the Century*, ed. Michael Raeburn and Victoria Wilson, exh. cat. (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1987), 53-54; Passanti, "Architecture," 77-78; Baker, *Creative Search*, 41-62. For the likely influence of Muthesius's book see also Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (London: Phaidon Press, 1986), 19. The fullest documentation of the Villa is found in Brooks, *Formative Years*, 71-91



masonry walls suggest a mineralogical structure. This has been most consistently explored by Sekler, who has shown that this symbolic evocation is particularly in debt to Owen Jones and, particularly, John Ruskin.<sup>6</sup>

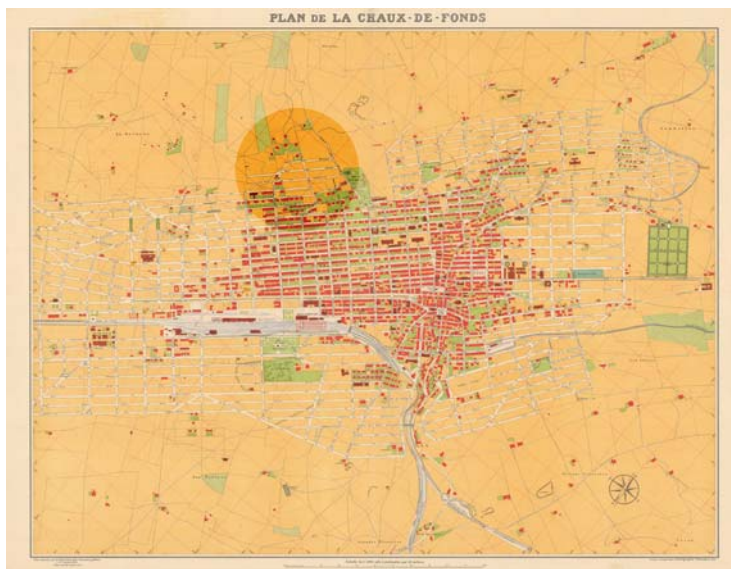
While the literature is mainly focused on ornament and style, I will take a more wholistic approach that considers also the internal layout and the way the house is integrated in its garden and landscape. The aim is to see whether the theme of the fir surpassed the figurative representation of the façades, informing the inner spatial conception, and the extent to which Jeanneret's design entails a comprehensive experience of architecture and landscape, encapsulating a first manifestation of Le Corbusier's architectural promenade. A brief comment on the geographic, urban, and social context of La Chaux-de-Fonds is required before going any further.

**CONTEXT** Located at the bottom of an isolated valley in the high Jura, La Chaux-de-Fonds is a small town surrounded by low mountains, mostly covered with fir trees and some pasture fields. An orthogonal grid running along the east-west direction of the valley supports a system of massive terraced housing blocks suitable for private investment (fig. 8). The typology, envisioned by Charles Knab, was informed by the *Sonnenstadt* (Sun City), Dr. Bernhard Christoph Faust's hygienist model for the ideal city oriented towards the sun. The blocks of flats have access from the north, while south private gardens provide a green area separating them from the south street and increasing the distance between the rows of blocks. At the bottom of the valley, with severe climate conditions, surrounded by mountains which cut the view over the horizons and the sun light, *la ville triste* expanded at an alarming rate in the late nineteenth-century under this urban design, presenting a homogeneous architecture that, more than on architects, depended on Knab's typology, the entrepreneurs' interests, and fire prevention.<sup>7</sup>

6 The seminal work on Jeanneret's early creative works, their relationships with the context of L'Eplattenier's teaching method and with the ornamental motifs of the house, remains Sekler's *Early Drawings*, to which I will frequently refer in this chapter. On the analogy between the Villa Fallet's façades and the fir see *ibid.*, 108-129. Sekler treats the importance of the tree in Le Corbusier's thought and work mainly in the fourth chapter, later published in a revised and enlarged version as "Le Corbusier, Ruskin, the Tree and the Open Hand," in *The Open Hand*, Russell Walden ed. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1977), 42-95.

7 After a fire in 1794, the city was rebuilt in its existing street pattern. In 1835, a rational orthogonal grid plan for future expansion was adopted following the plan of Charles-Henri Junod, being further extended in 1854 by the engineer Charles Knab's plan. Between 1890 and 1910 about 1200 buildings were built under Knab's plan, providing small dwellings for the growing population. The new plan would prevail until the First World War supporting the fast development of the town. See Jean-Daniel Jeanneret, ed., *La Chaux de Fonds, Le Locle, Urbanisme Horloger*, (Le Locle: Éditions G d'Encre, 2009); Emery, *Réhabilitation urbaine et interdisciplinarité: cas de La Chaux-de-Fonds* (Lausanne: EPFL, 1978); *idem.*, "La Chaux-de-Fonds, matrice urbaine," in *Jeanneret (avant Le Corbusier)*, 11-15; Gubler, "La Chaux-de-Fonds, le développement urbain au XIXe siècle," in *Jeanneret (avant Le Corbusier)*, 57-60; Brooks has noted that "elsewhere in Switzerland La Chaux-de-Fonds is sometimes disparagingly called *la ville triste*." Brooks, *Formative Years*, 3-7.





**FIG. 8** La Chaux-de-Fonds. Plan, 1908.  
The circle marks the Pouillerel slopes where the first houses by Jeanneret are located.

At the time of Junod and Knab's plans, watch production depended on an organized system of small specialized contractors, each working in small workshops, usually set out in a dependence of the manufacturer's dwelling, such as Fallet's. The population's dramatic growth was due to the fast development of Swiss watchmaking industry after the 1893 Chicago World Fair. Production became progressively industrialized, changing the traditional social structure of the town. A small Jewish community, which had settled in town at the end of the century, became the main industrialist class. Small specialized contractors, as well as the labor class, became progressively dependent on this new reality. The burgeoning gap between the growing labor class and the rich bourgeoisie enfeebled social balance, fostering ideological changes. Socialist ideology emerged in the heart of a republican society and its austere Calvinist traditions. La Chaux-de-Fonds saw the birth of the international Anarchic movement after some French supporters had taken refuge there in 1871, it was visited by Sébastien Faure, an anarchic partisan whose conference Jeanneret seems to have attended, and Carl Marx observed in *Das Kapital* that the town could be looked upon "as a huge watch factory" where the cooperation between the subdivided operations of independent handicrafts was able to produce twice as many as the factories of Geneva every year, where the specialized workers operated directly under the control of a single capitalist.<sup>8</sup>

25

<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth-century Switzerland accounted for ninety per cent of watch world production. La Chaux-de-Fonds, which depended entirely upon the watchmaking industry, controlled sixty per cent of all Swiss exports in value terms. In 1900 there were two hundred watchmakers, nine banks, and nine newspapers, three of them daily published. In 1905 twenty-five unions were affiliated to *l'Union ouvrière*. Jeanneret's father wrote in his diary in January 7, 1893: "Il y a des armées de gens sans travail dans les grandes cités... Il y a aussi beaucoup de déperdition du sens moral, de la notion du bien chez les prolétaires, mais les revendications des masses sont légitimes, la séparation

L'Eplattenier, a follower of Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement, who believed in the didactic and social role of art and in its capacity to create a more beautiful environment for mankind, reacted against the homogeneous architecture and the grid plan *without soul* of the industrialized city.<sup>9</sup> In 1902, he built his house and studio on the outskirts of the city, in a clearing of the forest at the lower slopes of Pouillerel, the mountain that encloses the city to the north. Although the design's authorship seems to belong to L'Eplattenier, he was assisted by Chapallaz.<sup>10</sup> This meant a return to nature, seen as source of knowledge and inspiration, following the generalized tendency of Swiss painters, who sought the values of traditional life. Like those painters, who used to gather in the countryside establishing artistic colonies of artists, L'Eplattenier was also trying to build a collective spirit in his drawing classes. Having set his studio on the top floor of the house, he could devote himself to his artistic activity surrounded by nature and overlooking the landscape. As Gubler has pointed out, the setting of L'Eplattenier's house at Pouillerel was seen as a kind of rite of initiation.<sup>11</sup> It was with L'Eplattenier's house that the occupation of Pouillerel began, and it was next to him that Fallet bought his lot.

## THE METAPHORICAL NARRATIVE IN THE VILLA FALLET

Far from the modern architecture which Le Corbusier would promote later, the design of the villa integrates the established canon of the Arts and Crafts vocabulary,

...  
entre les deux castes est devenue trop grande, la classe moyenne (base d'un édifice solide) disparaissant rapidement." Quoted in Brooks, *Formative Years*, 15. On the panorama of the watchmaking industry and manufacture of La Chaux-de-Fonds at the turn of the century, its social, geographic and economic context see Pierre du Bois, *Les Mythologies de la Belle Epoque: La Chaux-de-Fonds, André Evard et l'Art Nouveau* (Grandson: Willy Suter, 1975), 5-9; Gubler, "In Time with Swiss Watchmakers," in Russell, *Early Works*, 121-27; Gubler, "Pratique architecturale," 222; Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 2-8. Marx's mention of La Chaux-de-Fonds has been pointed out by several authors and can be found in Marx, *Capital: a critique of political economy*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 1:462. On Faure and Jeanneret see chap. 2 of this work.  
**9** See L'Eplattenier, "L'Esthétique des villes" in *Compte rendu des délibérations de l'assemblée générale des délégués de l'Union des villes suisses* (Zurich: Orel Füssli, 1910).

**10** On the design's credits of L'Eplattenier's house see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 129. Others have a different understanding about the involvement of Chapallaz; cf. Emery, "Chapallaz versus Jeanneret," 23-28.

**11** Gubler, "Swiss Watchmakers," 122. The end of the nineteenth century saw the birth of several colonies of artists. For the Swiss context see Dario Gamboni, *La Géographie artistique*, *Ars Helvetica*, vol. 1 (Bern: Pro Helvetica, Editions Desertina, 1987), 191; Hans A. Lüthy and Hans-Jörg Heusser, *L'Art en Suisse 1890-1945* (Lausanne: Payot, 1983), 17-18. L'Eplattenier's drawing lessons often took place in the Pouillerel. In this low mountain, covered with fir trees, his students incessantly drew rocks, plants, animals, and landscapes: "Le dimanche, nous étions souvent groupés au sommet de la montagne la plus haute. A pics et grandes rampes douces; pâturages, troupeaux de grands bestiaux, horizons infinis, vol des corbeaux. Nous préparions l'avenir. Ici, disait le maître, nous construirons un monument dédié à la nature. Nous y consacrerons la fin de notre vie. Nous quitterons la ville et habiterons sous les futaies, au pied de l'édifice que lentement nous remplirons de nos œuvres. Tout le site s'y incarnera. Toute la faune, la flore. Une fois dans l'année, de grandes fêtes s'y donneront..." Le Corbusier, *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Crès, 1925), 198-199.

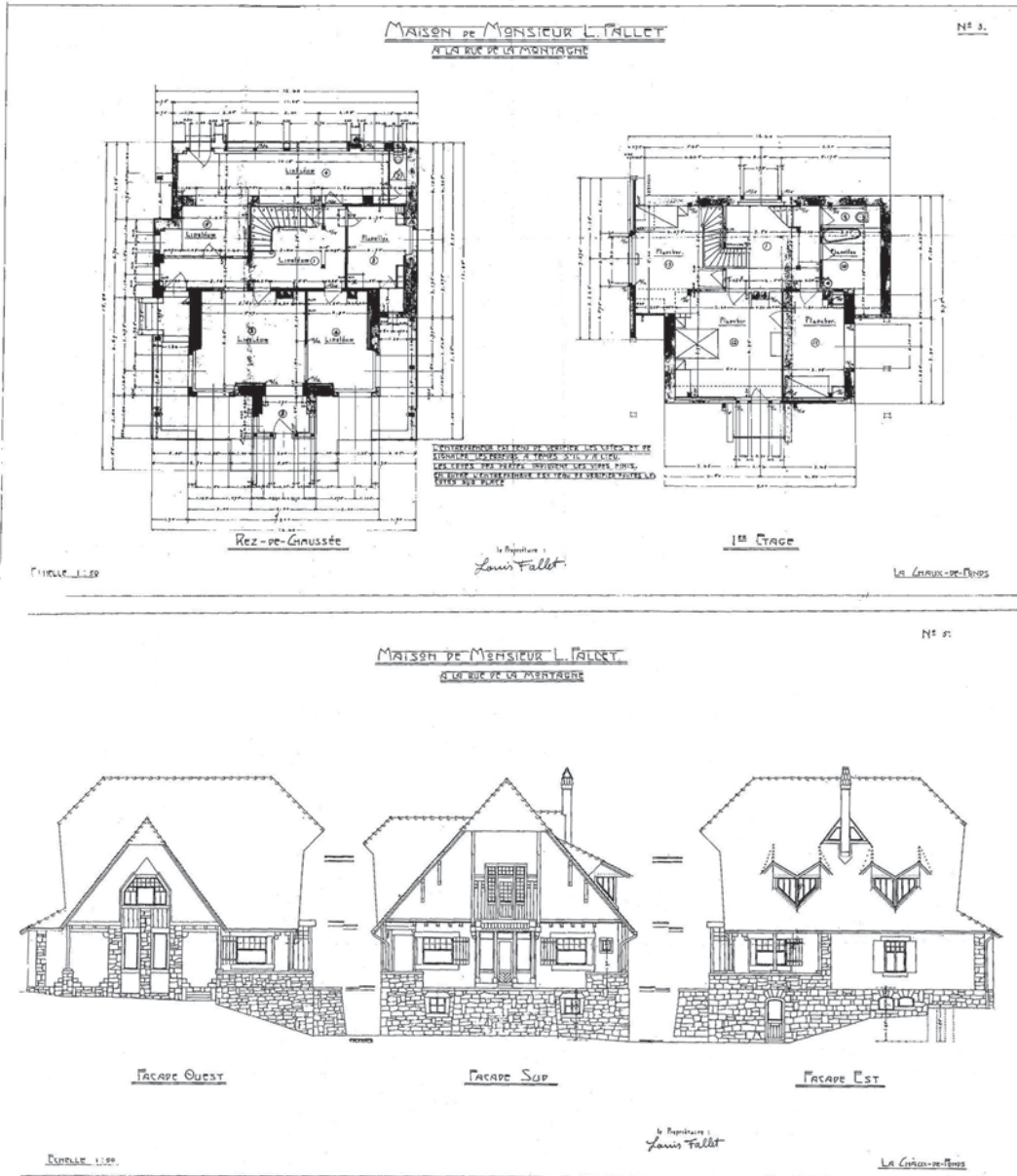


FIG. 9 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. Plan, 1906.

FIG. 10 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. West, south and east elevations, 1906.

following a pattern of organization common in Swiss bourgeois villas at the time—a cellar for the heating system, two floors and an attic (fig. 9, 10). The cellar in rough masonry creates the horizontal plan above which the two storey house rests. The design follows a linear axis in the slope's direction, reinforced by the pitched roof and the bilateral symmetry of the south façade. A second axis defines a cross-gable marking the entrance. A central double-height hall at the rear constitutes the core of a 180 degree radial distribution, leaving the south area free for the main rooms. At the ground floor level, the two main rooms develop southwards. The east flank accommodates the kitchen and the west the narrow entry corridor. Fallet's workshop is a one-storey lean-to running along the north façade. The upper floor adopts the same principle, two



**FIG. 11** La Chaux-de-Fonds. Pouillerel area. Plan, 1908.

The chemin de Pouillerel is the bottom curve road. On the right is the Villa Fallet; on the left, L'Eplattenier's house.

**FIG. 12** La Chaux-de-Fonds. Partial plan, 1908. North limit of the grid plan and Pouillerel area. In black, access from the urban grid to the Villa Fallet along the rue du Signal and the chemin de Pouillerel.

rooms on the south side, a third room on the west above the entrance, and a bathroom to the east. An s-shape stair leads to the third children's room in the attic.

The lot is next to the chemin de Pouillerel, on the opposite side of L'Eplattenier's (fig. 11). The terrain slants to south, overlooking La Chaux-de-Fonds. The access extends beyond the city's orthogonal grid (fig. 12). From its north limit, where the rue du Balancier meets the rue du Nord, the grid gives way to an irregular road up an abrupt slope, the rue du Signal. After the initial steep part of the road the context dramatically changed; one faced the Villa Fallet's south façade surrounded by a natural area. The house was visible at that time, as the area was much more deprived of vegetation than it is today.<sup>12</sup> The road ascends gently, almost in a straight line, extending beyond the rue de la Montagne with a sharper slope until it reaches the south corner of Fallet's property (fig. 13-17). At this point it turns left at a right angle. Climbing along the perimeter of the lot, it leads to a curved ascending road on the right, the chemin de Pouillerel (fig. 18-22). The house disappears from sight, then is progressively revealed again along the curved road. Access to the house is gained at the top, almost at the end of the road, facing the cross-gable (fig. 23-24).

The first remarkable design choice is the setting of the house at the upper boundary of the property. The s-shape of the chemin de Pouillerel, separating Fallet's property from L'Eplattenier's, had left the larger part of L'Eplattenier's lot next to the higher boundary, where he had settled the house. Fallet's had an almost symmetrical situation. By making this choice Jeanneret had to deal with the narrowest part of the property, precisely at the point where the terrain begins to fall away sharply. Contrary to L'Eplattenier's case, it would have been easier to locate the house on the south side of the lot, and it would have provided a closer access from the town.

The first obvious reason for this choice is to take advantage of a higher vantage

<sup>12</sup> See Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 125, 536, fig.102. An old postcard published in Sekler's book shows the area between the town and the Villa Fallet almost deprived of trees, the road, and Fallet's south façade partially hidden by a house which would be built later. It proves that the house was visible at a distance and, most importantly, that the city and the far landscape were clearly seen from the house.









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**FIG. 13** Rue du Signal. View from the top of the climbing part of the road.

**FIG. 14** Rue du Signal. Crossroad with the rue de la Montane.

**FIG. 15** Rue du Signal. View from the top with the private entrance in the south corner of Fallet's property at the center.

**FIG. 16** Rue du Signal. View from the top with the private entrance in the south corner of Fallet's property.

**FIG. 17** Villa Fallet. View from the south corner, behind the foliage.

**FIG. 18** Ascending road along the south limit of Fallet's property.

**Fig. 19** Villa Fallet. South view.

**FIG. 20** Chemin de Pouillerel. View after turning right.

**FIG. 21** Chemin de Pouillerel. Villa Fallet. South façade.

**FIG. 22** Chemin de Pouillerel. South-west corner.

above


**FIG. 23** Chemin de Pouillerel. Villa Fallet. South-west.

**FIG. 24** Villa Fallet. Main entrance.

point, providing a panoramic view over the city and the south landscape. Also, setting back the house enriches the experience of the approach. Instead of gaining access at the end of the rue du Signal, it becomes necessary to meander and climb before reaching it, establishing a rhythm of sequential views over the house. The house becomes the pivot around which one strolls, losing it from sight, finding it again, approaching at an angle while ascending. Such a meandering access emphasizes the retreat into the countryside, after which the panoramic view acquires its full sense.

That the access was one of Jeanneret's concerns seems to be substantiated by the garden design. A thumbnail sketch in a letter to L'Eplattenier and some early photographs indicate that the garden preserves its main original features (fig. 25-26). It consists of a private access at the south corner on axis with the road from the town, developing along a clambering winding path which diagonally crosses the lot, leading to two terraces (fig. 27-30). The path echoes the chemin de Pouillerel's s-shape, searching for an easy slope. Two rows of small trees or plants taller than a man, seemingly disposed along the path, are shown in a photograph taken from the main road (fig. 26). This suggests that Jeanneret wanted to veil the view over the house and amplify the contrast between an enclosed path and the spaciousness of the terraces, giving continuity to the interspersed sequential views. At the arrival at the first horizontal terrace,

Une chose sûre : Pourrait je faire un  
 des canonnades, moyennant finances, de  
 ne prendre quelques bonnes photographies de la  
 bicoque. Si n'ai rien en le temps de faire  
 moi-même. L'extérieur fera mieux, la  
 décoration surtout celle de la façade, puis-elle  
 quand le tout est suspendu de neige, puis-elle  
 fraîche (barrière, balcons etc) fera bien  
 ainsi plus d'intérêt. une vue se donne  
 pas trop mal de puis l'angle sud-ouest  
 de la seconde terrasse en 2 ; just-à-tout une  
 de face, une de derrière,  
 & à l'intérieur ! du Hall.  
 1 de la salle à manger.  
 1 de la cuisine si la  
 temps n'est pas trop  
 abîmé par la neige.



Et voilà, ce sont mes idées  
 que je t'envoie !  
 Je travaillerai, moi-même à Vienne, moyennant

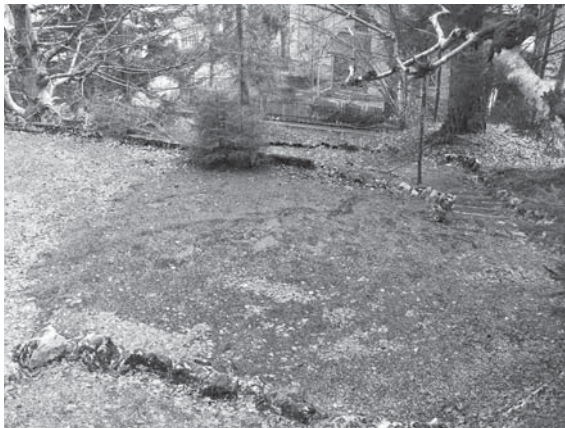


FIG. 25 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. Garden. Sketch in Jeanneret's letter to L'Eplattenier, 1 November 1907.

FIG. 26 Villa Fallet. View from entrance at the south corner.

FIG. 27 Villa Fallet. Private access entry.

FIG. 28 Villa Fallet. Private access. Path and load masonry wall.

FIG. 29 Villa Fallet. Arrival of the winding path at the garden's lower terrace.

FIG. 30 Villa Fallet. Access to the upper terrace.





**FIG. 31** Villa Fallet. View from the lower terrace.

**FIG. 32** Villa Fallet. Arrival at the main entrance.

**FIG. 33** Villa Fallet. Loggia.



FIG. 34 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. View from the north-west, probably 1906.

the façade's tree-like silhouette would dramatically loom high, echoing the experience one had had at a distance (fig. 31).

Access to the second terrace is gained after a set of steps (fig. 30). From there, another set of steps develops along the side façade of the cellar, continuing the scale of the initial path. At the top, it joins the main access from the street, next to the main entrance area (fig. 32). Turning right, one reaches the loggia five steps above. The entrance door is on the left, while to the right one may follow along the loggia, the landscape being gradually revealed (fig. 33). The arrival point—the protruding area of the cellar—provided a final panoramic view over the city and the landscape after the variety of sequential views of the ascent.

The subtle grading of the garden acquires the role of articulating the relationship of landscape and house. On the one hand, contrast between the garden and the surrounding landscape is avoided, as suggested by the delicate fence surrounding the property, the rough masonry of the loading walls molding the terrain, or the winding private access. Some sketches suggest that the view was not thought to be filtered by foreground vegetation as it is today, and suggest the intention to efface the limits of the lot, conceiving the terrain and its access as continuous with the surrounding environment (fig. 34). On the other hand, the building and the garden are brought into a close dialogue, the masonry walls of the cellar and the terrace above it extending the stepped sequence of the garden.

The main experience provided by the overall layout is clear: after a meandering ascent one finds the view over the town and the landscape from the house. This is a logical response to the site, also adopted by L'Eplattenier. Two main differences must however be noted. In its original version, L'Eplattenier's house presented a single volume with a pattern of organization developing along an almost symmetrical linear

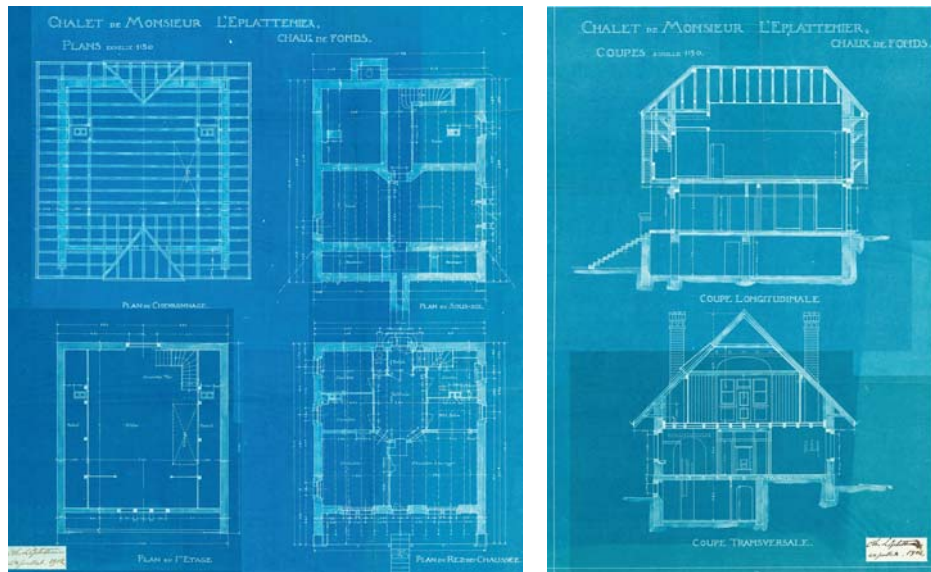


FIG. 35, 36 L'Eplattenier's house. Original blueprints. Plans and cross-sections, 1902.

axis, with the entrance at the rear (fig. 35-37). And L'Eplattenier seems to have left the terrain in its original shape. By contrast, Jeanneret explored the winding ascent in the garden and internalized it. By extending the intervention to the totality of the property and adopting a side entrance, Jeanneret's design reveals three major aspects. The private access is not significantly shorter than the public access, suggesting that Jeanneret aimed at a total and comprehensive control of the design and the experience underlying it. Second, the private and the public accesses merge next to the entrance area, following a single inner circulation, and thus providing a single space experience on the inside. Finally, the twisting inner circulation of the house extends the picturesque nature of both accesses, suggesting Jeanneret's attempt to construct a continuous and consistent spatial experience of exterior and interior.

This attempt is further substantiated by his choice to locate the entry at the cross-gable's side wall rather than on its axis. By virtue of this rotation and receded position, entry lost significance and became just one of the sequential episodes punctuating the ascending way. We don't approach the door head-on, but tortuously. The continuous zigzag movement and sequential episodes, conflating interior and exterior, are reinforced by both spaces preceding and following the entry. In the exterior area of the loggia, the low horizontal ceiling and the small dimensions seem to seek an interior character, a possible analogy of a space under the treetops, if one thinks of the cross-gable as a representation of a fir. This horizontal space is then extended to the dim inner narrow corridor once inside, establishing a spatial continuity until reaching the hall. It is only in the hall, squared and vertical, that the spatial character dramatically changes,





FIG. 37 L'Eplattenier's house. South-east view, before 1904.

FIG. 38 Villa Fallet. Hall and entry corridor.

FIG. 39 Villa Fallet. Hall.

FIG. 40 Villa Fallet. Living-dining room after alterations.

this time seeking an exterior character. (fig. 38, 39). Extending through two floors, the space is lit from the north by a clerestory window. The light flooding in diagonally is dramatized by the contrast between the wallboards on the ground floor level and the white stucco on the upper level, bringing to mind the fading light of a clearing in the forest. The analogy is reinforced by the wooden pilasters, the vertical pattern of the wallboards, doors, and banister, all conveying tree trunks. The triangular shape of the angled wooden ceiling in its receding natural color, with its timber supports, convey the image of treetops. This is furthered by the three-dimensional zigzag pattern, which Jeanneret commonly used in the stylization of the fir. Finally, the themes of the ornamental work, discussed by Sekler, contribute to the forest atmosphere.<sup>13</sup>

The difference between the loggia and the hall indicates that Jeanneret was trying to explore contrasting spatial values such as horizontal and vertical, static and dynamic, regular and irregular. But in the hall, it is particularly evident that the association with the natural environment is not only sought at the ornamental level, but also informs the spatial character and the experience associated with it.

It is also in the hall that the itinerary of the visitor merges with the architectural axis. There, the final turn leads to the living-dining room, horizontality extended

<sup>13</sup> In 1944, the inner decoration was described as follows: "ses façades étaient recouvertes d'une abondante ornementation dont le sapin, le nuage et le corbeau firent les frais, tandis que les revêtements intérieurs figuraient des forêts à flanc de montagne et que le couronnement des meubles ambitionnait d'évoquer la majesté et le mystère des horizons alpestres." Maximilien Gauthier, *Le Corbusier; ou, l'architecture au service de l'homme* (Paris: Denoël, 1944), 20.



**FIG. 41** Villa Fallet. Living-dining room, bay window and access to the east room, n.d.

**FIG. 42** Villa Fallet. Living-dining room and bay window, n.d.

**FIG. 43** Villa Fallet. Living-dining room and elevated sitting area to the left, n.d.

through the corner window, seemingly aspiring to a panoramic view over the exterior (fig. 40).<sup>14</sup> The same happens in the east room, decorated with organic motifs (barely visible in fig. 41). The axial bay window and its receded glazed surfaces invite one to go further. Access is gained through a narrow aperture, a range of events marking the transition between spaces (fig. 42): the light contrast, the lintel, two seats, a step, and the timber work, the vertical elements bringing to mind a passage filtered by thin trunks. Once inside the bay, the glazed surfaces offer a 180 degree panorama of the exterior, contrasting with the more secluded space of the living-dining room. This space completes the threshold sequence preceding it, giving access to the exterior terrace above the cellar and its 180 degree panorama.

A similar experience is repeated in the main bedroom and its first floor balcony. The L-shaped stairs of the hall lead to an upper peripheral gallery skirting the central void and providing access to the bedrooms. Like on the ground floor, the vertical hall gives place to the horizontal axis of the main bedroom. This is extended to the south balcony above the bay window, protected by the overhanging roof, and providing the final panoramic view over the city and the mountains. Meanwhile, the S-shaped stairs leading to the attic further extend the vertical development in a meandering rotational movement that inverts the direction of the former stairs, leaving the space next to the attic window at the rear free. The zigzag ascending movement along the garden ending in the terrace above the cellar is thus enriched by an organic ascending movement along the hall's vertical axis. In articulating the movement upstairs with the turn to-

<sup>14</sup> Jeanneret's commitment to this solution is confirmed by Le Corbusier's latter assessment: "A 17 ans et demi, je construisis ma première maison. Déjà j'avais risqué contre l'avis des sages. Une témérité : deux fenêtres d'angle." Le Corbusier, *Mise au point* (Paris: Forces Vives, 1966), 13.

wards the south, the double-height hall is a cardinal element in the spatial and experiential structure of the house.

This inner vertical development seems to suggest that the idea of an ascending circulation is central to the overall conception. This is further confirmed by particular inner details. Despite the lack of detailed drawings of the built version, a photograph of the original solution of the living-dining room survived, showing a step next to the corner window (fig. 43). This particular feature is already present in a study for the built-in sideboard (FLC1749).<sup>15</sup> The depth of the exterior wall and the built-in sideboard provided enough space to accommodate a chair at the upper level next to the window. The step develops obliquely confirming that it formed an elevated sitting area at the corner. Emphasis was thus put on a cozy elevated viewpoint. The way up from the town along the hill, which was first extended by the setting at the upper part of the property, was extended by the steps of the loggia, and finally by the step leading to the panorama-like window from which one would overlook the landscape filtered by the double branch-like mullions.

Although special emphasis was given to the south direction, the sequence can be applied to the several rooms of the house. The solution of an elevated sitting area next to the windows had been generally adopted in the many rooms, as Chavanne and Laville have noted.<sup>16</sup> This emphasized the principle of an elevated space overlooking the landscape as a primary idea of the spatial experience to be offered to the inhabitant. In short, the ascending meandering ascent was fully carried into each of the rooms of the house, establishing continuity with the sequence of the approach to the house, and merging interior and exterior in a comprehensive spatial narrative towards the view. This constitutes a fundamental temporal experience: the encounter with the horizon at the apex after the ascent.

To complete this analysis, we now must turn our attention to the exterior composition. The principles analyzed so far have evident connections with the façades and volumetric composition, reinforcing the directionality of the whole and contributing to the dynamic quality of the experience. Expressing the inner pattern of organization, the elaborated compositional balance reveals the prominence of the south direction. This is particularly clear as one approaches the entrance side. Jeanneret's original blueprint is instructive (fig. 10). The off-center cross-gable, for instance, defines an asymmetrical mass, particularly expressive in the pitched roof, left in suspension on

<sup>15</sup> The original living-dining room was later merged into the adjacent bedroom. Jeanneret's built-in sideboard and the step next to the window were equally suppressed.

<sup>16</sup> See Chavanne and Laville, "Premières constructions," 483. When Chavanne and Laville visited the house in the early 60s these elevated sitting areas still existed. This is also suggested by a sketch of the east dormer in the verso of the sheet FLC1744v. See Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 119.



FIG. 44 Villa Fallet. North-west view seen from the attic of the Jaquemet house.

the south side by the receding of the ground floor wall. Another example is the leaning forward of the roof's edge, or the hipped-gable roof, further projected at the top along the ridge on the south than at the rear, where the outline imprints an enclosing effect to the longitudinal axis. In sum, the composition enhances the directionality by virtue of a delicate sense of balance between masses, lines, and sloping terrain.

The difference between the hipped-gable roof at the rear and that on the south becomes strikingly clear when compared in a three-quarter view from the north-west and south-west approaches. From the south-west, the hipped-gable roof's projection and the low perspective of the climbing approach dramatize this forward movement and that of the protruding elements of the south façade (fig. 31). As a consequence, the south façade seems to open to the landscape. This is the view that Jeanneret emphatically asked to be photographed and sent to him while in his first initiatory trip to Italy. The point of view from which the photograph should be taken was specified by Jeanneret as the extremity of the second terrace, at the point where it meets the path (fig. 25).<sup>17</sup> This half way up position confirms the interest for the low angled perspective as one approaches the house from the town.

By contrast, the leaning profile of the overhanging roof at the rear and the downward movement of the hipped-gable roof leave the façade's upper level in a shadowy receded plane, reinforcing the enclosing effect while approaching from the north-west (fig. 44). The lean-to strengthens this recess, dividing the elevation in two, eliminating any focus of attention in the rear façade. Simultaneously, its horizontal volume—originally emphasized by the windows in a band—conveys the end of the longitudinal

<sup>17</sup> The sketch of the garden that Jeanneret drew in the letter indicates the point "a" from which the photograph should be taken. The photograph is probably the one shown here as fig. 31.



development and leads the eye to the side elevation, first, and then to the south landscape view.<sup>18</sup> Jeanneret explored this angled view in the perspective FLC2064 (fig. 34), in which the aerial viewpoint emphasizes the relationship between the house and the roofs down in the town, while the winding path drawn next to the entrance suggests the importance attached to the meandering access and the envisaged continuity of movement towards south.

The picturesque nature of the overall compositional balance of masses of the villa agrees with Viollet-le-Duc's concept of *ponderation*, which he regarded as a device that would enable the architect to achieve harmony in asymmetrical design. Similarly, Jeanneret's design can also be read in the light of Viollet-le-Duc's discussion on the balance between asymmetrical compositions and sloping terrains.<sup>19</sup> Yet, the way it conveys a privileged direction echoing the inner pattern of organization and a particular space experience seems a personal interpretation added by Jeanneret.

As for the east façade, it was partially hidden by a bank of trees. The terrain, falling away sharply, had no access or road on that side. It therefore took a secondary role. But the rejection of a formal classical symmetry also reflects the narrative proposed. While the cross-gable on the west announces the entrance from a distance, the absence of an east cross-gable can be seen as an expression of the turning direction towards the south that takes place in the hall.

Finally, there is the south façade, where the inner impulse southwards reaches its highest expression through the protruding volume of the bay window with the balcony above, and through its echo in the axial projecting area of the podium (later expanded by subsequent owners). This arrangement results in an axial sequence of spaces overlooking the landscape, as well as in a façade composed by sequential planes with different finishings, extending the rhythm of planes of the garden's masonry walls and of its terraces in a minor scale. The direction and depth relationships of the elements of the façade are then reinforced by several details on different scales (fig. 45): the roof overhang and its wooden bracket supports; the receding of the façade's plane on the ground floor, projecting the gable forward and revealing the floor joists more explicitly than on the cross-gable; the corbelled, layered stone work at the corners of the bay window, adopting the same direction; the overhanging hipped-gable roof, protecting the balcony underneath and contributing to the definition of a virtual central protrud-

<sup>18</sup> The development of watchmaking manufacture in the region introduced this type of windows in a band in housing design, more specifically in the work space of the house, providing enough light to work in the winter. See Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même* (Geneva: Éditions Rousseau, 1970), 22.

<sup>19</sup> Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, vol. 1 (1858; repr., Paris: A. Morel et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1863), 478-486, passim. Citations refer to the Morel edition. On Viollet-le-Duc's discussion on asymmetrical composition as a response to the constraints to the site and program see Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 82-83.



FIG. 45 Villa Fallet. South façade. Detail.

ing volume above the bay window.

In sum, volumetric balance, ornamental details, and technical options cluster around the central aim to express directionality and convey it as one approaches the house either on the way up or on the way down. This is achieved by the play of dynamic tensions, oblique planes and projecting elements, symmetry and asymmetry, intricate volumetric counterbalances, and the close interaction of the garden and house, all of them seemingly considered from the perceptual point of view.

For the purpose of this work, one must notice that, while the overall design reveals the importance attributed to the south landscape view, choices such as carrying the meandering ascent into the house, or the evocation of the fir in the façades, or the hall's analogy of a clearing in the forest, construct a comprehensive experience, suggesting a metaphorical narrative: that of climbing a hill and discovering the view from the summit after walking through a bunch of trees. Thus understood, Jeanneret's first architectural work presents itself as a coherent design at the spatial, compositional, and experiential levels. When compared with designs such as those of Chapallaz or L'Eplattenier, it reveals a remarkable degree of autonomy in his thinking, his ability to assimilate several distinct references and to select and use them in a consistent synthesis. Such consistency calls for an examination of the early works at the art school. The aim is to understand the extent to which they harbor the seeds of this metaphorical narrative and space conception.

## SPATIAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES IN JEANNERET'S EARLY WORK

Le Corbusier stated that he had discovered architecture through painting.<sup>20</sup> This applies to the Villa Fallet in the first place. Having no training in architecture, he would naturally have thought of architecture through his education in drawing. This makes his early graphic works an important source to interpret the villa's design. My specific interest is to understand the extent to which they embody spatial, perceptual and experiential qualities, allowing us to look at his first villa as an architectural conception that arose from those qualities and to support the deliberate construction of a narrative through it.

Jeanneret's student works can be broadly divided into two types. The first one concerns studies on ornamental patterns, closely associated with the instrumental role of drawing in L'Eplattenier's program. Two of its major aspects have been largely discussed, the process of formal reduction and the search for a regionalist style. His teaching method strongly relied on drawing local natural elements, transcribing their underlying geometric order into reduced forms, which were then used as the basis for ornamental composition. This procedure was based on authors such as Ruskin, who argued that landscape painting required a method of reduction, since in nature "nothing is ever seen perfectly, but only by fragments, and under various conditions of obscurity." To secure a true representation, the method of reduction had to be based on the character of the object drawn, hence on understanding its nature, structure, proportions, and pattern of growth.<sup>21</sup> Drawing became the tool to observe, understand, and express nature in art, and geometric abstraction the basis for decorative patterns. The symbolic repertoire of the Jura landscape was distilled into two main paradigmatic forms: the equilateral triangle became a reduced representation of the fir, and the layered corbel a representation of the stratified limestone bedrock of the Jura.

The second type we find in Jeanneret's drawings concerns the numerous landscape representations of the Jura. Sekler's study of Jeanneret's early drawings emphasizes the influence of Ruskin over both L'Eplattenier and Jeanneret, not only concerning the studies of ornamental patterns but also these landscape representations. The

<sup>20</sup> Le Corbusier, quoted in Joseph Savina, "Sculpture de Le Corbusier-Savina," *Aujourd'hui* 9, no. 51 (November 1965), 98.

<sup>21</sup> Good drawing, Ruskin wrote is "an abstract of natural facts." See Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1867), 123, 209. All subsequent citations refer to this edition. Similar views were held by Grasset, who argued for an ornamental artistic expression based on the geometrical order underlying natural elements, or Jones, who wrote, for instance, that "flowers or other natural objects should not be used as ornaments, but conventional representations founded upon them sufficiently suggestive to convey the intended image to the mind, without destroying the unity of the object they are employed to decorate." Grasset, *Méthode de Composition Ornamentale* (Paris: Librairie centrale des beaux-arts, 1905); Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1868), 6. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.



FIG. 46 Jeanneret. Watercolor, n.d. (FLC2021)

author has shown that Ruskin provided a philosophical basis for Jeanneret's artistic thought and was a direct inspiration for Le Corbusier's awareness of nature and its phenomena.

Because these works are central to our task, I would like to mention Rosario De Simone's observation about Jeanneret's travel sketches and annotations. These, he holds, are not a simple recollection of information, rather and above all constituting "projections of a creative re-elaboration." In tracing his "creative itinerary," they are a tool for the comprehension of the cognitive procedures operating in the formation of his thought and his projects, delineating the interpretative framework of selected references, though not forcibly enunciated.<sup>22</sup> While this should be kept in our minds for the chapters to come, it is also through this very same lens that the drawings I am about to discuss must be looked at.

Let us start with the landscape representations. The encounter with the vast horizons from the summit of the Jura Mountains after a meandering ascent synthesizes an experience insistently drawn by Jeanneret. In aesthetic terms, their main characteristic lies in a dialectical interaction of the categories of the picturesque and the Sublime, one that concerns a bodily experience involving the notions of prospect, shelter and mental projection.

The vastness of nature is repeatedly portrayed, occasionally with recourse to the grandeur of the panorama (fig. 46). Silhouettes of distant ridges, sometimes hovering above the fog, convey the sense of spatial depth by joining near and far in the pictorial plane. They evoke overpowering nature, the timeless and the remote, i.e., the Sublime, as "anything which elevates the mind is sublime, and elevation of mind is produced by the contemplation of greatness of any kind."<sup>23</sup>

42

<sup>22</sup> Rosario De Simone, *Ch. E. Jeanneret – Le Corbusier: Viaggio in Germania 1910-1911* (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 1989), 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, rev. ed. (New York: John Wiley, 1862), 1: 41-42. All subsequent citations refer to the Wiley edition.



FIG. 47 Jeanneret. Watercolor, n.d. (FLC2016-V)

FIG. 48 Jeanneret. Watercolor, 1905. (FLC1905)

In the tradition of romantic painting, some of Jeanneret's watercolors are an attempt to capture the character of the natural environment in a Ruskinian manner, that is, by introducing a certain degree of mystery through an "apparently uncertain execution" (fig. 47, 48). According to Ruskin, "a certain sort of indistinctness" is necessary to the highest art. What distinguished Turner from other painters was precisely the "principles of *delineation*, or that mysterious and apparently uncertain execution" of his paintings. Jeanneret explored some of the devices pointed out by Ruskin to express this "mystery," such as the presence of clouds or fog (fig. 46-48).<sup>24</sup> In fig. 47, we may notice that the background is more clearly defined than the foreground vegetation. Conversely, the foreground of fig. 48 is set against a hazy background.

This also reflects Ruskin's discussion on the impossibility that the human eye has in focusing objects at unequal distances at the same time. Therefore, in painting, either the foreground or the background should be sacrificed in order to express space.<sup>25</sup> In Ruskin's explanation on the *absolute infinity of things*, these issues are associated to prospect, i.e., to a temporal ordering of events:

"We never see anything clearly ... everything we look at, be it large or small, near or distant, has an equal quantity of mystery in it; and the only question is, not how much mystery there is, but at what part of the object mystification begins. We suppose we see the ground under our feet clearly, but if we try to number its grains of dust, we shall find that it is as full of confusion and doubtful form as anything else; so that there is literally no point of clear sight, and there never can be. What we call seeing a thing clearly, is only seeing enough of it to make out what it is; this point of intelligibility varying in distance for different magnitudes and kinds of things, while the appointed quantity of mystery remains nearly the same for all. Thereby: throwing an open book and an embroidered handkerchief on a lawn, at a distance of half a mile we cannot tell which is which; that is the point of mystery for the whole of those things. They are then white spots of distinct shape. We approach them, and perceive that one is a book, the other a handkerchief, but cannot read the one, nor trace the embroidery of the other. The mystery has ceased to

<sup>24</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 4:53-56.

<sup>25</sup> Ruskin, "Of Truth of Space: First, as Dependent on the Focus of the Eye," chap. 4 in *Modern Painters*, 1:182-186.





FIG. 49 Jeanneret. Watercolor, 1906. (FLC2189)

FIG. 50 Jeanneret. Watercolor, n.d. (FLC2202)

be in the whole things, and has gone into their details. We go nearer, and can now read the text and trace the embroidery, but cannot see the fibres of the paper, nor the threads of the stuff. The mystery has gone into a third place. We take both up and look closely at them; we see the watermark and the threads, but not the hills and dales in the paper's surface, nor the fine fibres which shoot off from every thread. The mystery has gone into a fourth place, where it must stay, till we take a microscope, which will send it into a fifth, sixth, hundredth, or thousandth place, according to the power we use."<sup>26</sup>

Ruskin's *absolute infinity of things*, translated into a progressive treatment of *uncertain execution*, is therefore associated with mystery and exploratory movement, be it effective or imagined. Jeanneret seems to have incorporated this idea of a bodily temporal ordering of events, portraying the experience of the Jura landscape through it.

This raises the themes of space and depth, extensively explored in Jeanneret's representations of the vastness of the landscape seen from high vantage points. Some examples are undoubtedly related to Ruskin's precepts of "aerial perspective" and the mystery caused by the infinitude and vastness of space.<sup>27</sup> Often, they implicate the notions of prospect and shelter. The watercolor FLC2189 (fig. 49) exemplifies Jeanneret's attention to the sense of depth, achieved through the confrontation and scale contrast of a near foreground set against a distant background. The foreground leaves put a sharp emphasis on the distance between the observer and the mountain silhouette on the background. A sequence of spaces developing between him and the horizon are

<sup>26</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 4:55-56.

<sup>27</sup> Ruskin discusses the "aerial perspective" of painting, i.e., the representation of landscape seen from the top of the mountains, relating it with the effects of mystery. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1: passim.

represented by horizontal bands of different colors: first, the group of dark blue/brown pine trees, then the blue mass of trees down in the valley, followed by the lower slopes of the opposite hill, and finally the grey far distant mountain. A similar approach is found in the watercolor FLC2202 (fig. 50), some particular aspects of which are noteworthy. First, Jeanneret adds a direct relationship between interior space and the view over the landscape. Second, the flowers in the foreground provide the scale referent, bringing the problem of spatial depth into the centre of the composition. Third, the mullion's perspective indicates that the beholder is looking downwards, dramatizing the high vantage point. This idea is further reinforced by the difference of level between the viewpoint and the sequence of mountain ridges below, hovering above the fog. The beholder definitely seems to be at the highest possible place, a hovering vantage point.

These watercolors are of note in that they implicate an intimate bodily experience of the natural space in three main ways. Consciously or otherwise, Ruskin's "uncertain execution" relates to a physiological premise of sensorial perception, and therefore a bodily one. Also, bodily experience is implicated in the notion of prospect, which assumes here two complementary natures. On one level, the high vantage points implicitly convey the preceding exploratory ascent. On another level, the effects of mystery and the grandeur of nature—the Sublime—imply the feeling of mental projection. Lastly, the filtered views of the last two cases are particularly explicit in their confrontation of the landscape with a lived, inhabited space. In the view filtered by the foliage, the scale contrast of foreground and background is such that one can almost sense the presence of the beholder at this high spot discovering the valley behind the foliage, the hanging foliage suggesting a cozy space under a treetop. This brings our thought back to the high vantage viewpoint provided by the sitting area of Fallet's living room, offering a panoramic view filtered by the branch-like mullions, or to the passage between the living room and the bay window. In the last watercolor, the cozy space providing human referent becomes explicitly architectural, also relating to the opposition between outside and inside. It is, one would say, a shelter high in the mountains, an inhabited space of retreat.

This confrontation of near and far, of visible and unseen, reflects a dialectical interaction of two elementary concepts of landscape experience in Romantic art pointed out by Jay Appleton: refuge—related with the sheltering and seeking protection; and prospect—which has to do with perceiving, exploratory activity, and the projection of imagination into an unattainable place. The concept of prospect, Appleton adds, can be called *exploration* "when environmental perception becomes organized into the sequential phases of a single purposeful operation." This informs the concept of shelter, from which the speculative process of the imagined world is a source of fascina-





FIG. 51 Jeanneret. Watercolor, n.d. (FLC2043)  
 FIG. 52 Jeanneret. Watercolor, 1904. (FLC2186)

tion and pleasure, finding in the horizon its more powerful evocation.<sup>28</sup> In short, the dialectical relationship of shelter and prospect involves a temporal, bodily experience of space and the projection of the mind. While we may recognize this dialectic in the elevated sitting area of the Villa Fallet's living room and associate it with these watercolors, other works by Jeanneret further explore these concepts.

Although subtle, the sense of the unfolding natural space is central to the composition of fig. 51. A careful inspection suggests that its main theme lies in a temporal ordering of events followed by the encounter with the far horizon from a high vantage point. The first key element is the white trunk which, the thumbnail sketch suggests, did not exist on that site. This acts as a foil, a *repoussoir* setting back and enhancing the centre of the composition, introducing depth as spatial sequence as well. Through the scale and color contrast with the receding dark tone of the red trunks, the white trunk defines two spaces, one in the foreground preceding it, and another one in the middle ground. Beyond the bunch of receded red trunks one easily senses the ground falling away steeply, revealing the horizon under the deep blue sky. The foliage, suggesting a vertical plane, conveys a threshold, a frame to be surpassed between the foreground and the white terrain. Brought close to the ground on the left edge, it works as a pivot that induces the rotation towards left. The changing direction is further enhanced by the slight slope of the white terrain and the red trunks, forming a barrier with a higher density on the right in counterpoint to the growing predominance of the deep blue sky on the left. All these devices suggest a temporal experience and the encounter with the view over the horizon taking place to the left, beyond the foliage in the foreground. In

<sup>28</sup> Jay Appleton, *The Symbolism of the Habitat: An Interpretation of Landscape in the Arts*, The Jesse and John Danz Lecturers (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), 25-34.

sum, reality is rearranged in order to construct an ascending meandering narrative of unfolding views throughout the natural environment, ultimately leading to the final panoramic view over the landscape atop of the hill. Here, mystery does not result from a certain degree of indistinctness of form, but from the postponed encounter with the latent horizon.

Based on these cases, it may be argued that Jeanneret interpreted the Jura landscape through a dialectics of the picturesque and the Sublime involving the notions of prospect, shelter, and mental projection. In accepting this, the association between these watercolors and the Villa Fallet implies two questions. First, is there any evidence that Jeanneret would transpose this landscape experience into architecture? Some of Jeanneret's works help us answer this first question. These explore the feelings of prospect and mystery within the architectural realm, sometimes probing into architecture through the analogy of nature.

The watercolor FLC2186 (fig. 52) shows a room with a small window in the center through which one glimpses the natural environment. At first glance, the watercolor seems to be only about the interior space. However, two devices highlight the idea of a sequence of spaces. The transition between interior and exterior takes place through a deep embrasure. Its depth is enhanced by the light contrast, endowing it with spatiality. This threshold enriches the light contrasted interior. The watercolor is then framed by a circling line and a white border—a device often used by Jeanneret in this period—conveying the idea of a second threshold, a window opening onto the drawing.<sup>29</sup> The proportions of the circling line are close to those of the window, while the perspective locates them on axis, further suggesting a sequence of thresholds. It is the circling line that first displays the latent movement, that first suggests a temporal ordering of events. Unless one moves forward, neither will the small window reveal much of the outer landscape nor will the circling line allow us to discover the missing inner space. This movement forward is further prompted by the slightly angled perspective. Out of axis, the asymmetrical balance of the composition conveys an approach at an angle, amplifying the dynamic effect and the sense of mystery; “as all subjects have a mystery in them, so all drawing must have a mystery in it.”<sup>30</sup>

Another case is a study drawing involving the analogy of nature and architecture (fig. 53). In this architectural conception drawn upon nature, Jeanneret was trying to transpose biological elements into architectonic structures, simultaneously transposing the architectural quality of the natural space into an axial sequence of architectural

<sup>29</sup> Sekler has pointed out Jeanneret's habit during these years of framing his drawings and sketches with a circling line bordered by white space, suggesting an obvious affinity with late nineteenth-century graphic design and with the general tendencies of Art Nouveau. Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 59.

<sup>30</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 4: 60.

spaces. In the main drawing of the sheet, the analogy between biological and architectonic elements is explicit. The trunks—or columns—closing the view to the sides, define an axial space below the foliage—or ceiling—and provide support to the branches drawn as a vaulted structure. At a middle distance, a hanging horizontal element suggests a threshold, or entrance, bringing to mind the foliage of fig. 51.<sup>31</sup> The pattern above the horizontal lintel emphasizes it by suggesting an ornamented flat surface, bringing the foreground space to an end. A second space beyond it is partially hidden, acquiring a Ruskinian aura of mystery. This is furthered in the central bunch of trees providing visual focus. The smaller sketch on the sheet seems to be the real view, first sketched in order to evaluate its suitability to be converted into an architectonic space. Even if relating to architectural ornament, this confirms Jeanneret's interest in space at this early stage and his approach to architecture through an analogy with nature. Moreover, the axial sequence of spaces—foreground space, the space beyond the lintel, and the far central trunks—is associated with mystery and a progressive indistinctness of representation, prompting exploratory movement. In sum, Jeanneret was equating ornament with the transposition of biological elements into architectonic structures, simultaneously transposing the temporal experience of the natural environment into that of built space.

Let us now focus on the second question implied in the association between Jeanneret's drawings and the Villa Fallet. On one level, it has been noted, L'Eplattenier aimed at the creation of a regionalist style constructed upon a symbolic repertoire of the paradigmatic natural elements of the Jura landscape, just as Jeanneret explored in the ornamental work of the Villa Fallet. On another level, we have just seen that, while Jeanneret's landscape representations relate to a bodily experience involving the feelings of prospect, shelter and mental projection, he probed into architectural space in similar terms. Did Jeanneret see in the meandering ascent leading to large vistas from the apex a paradigmatic experience of the Jura landscape, and can the metaphorical narrative of the Villa Fallet be seen as an experiential regionalist expression? To answer this question one must turn to Jeanneret's studies of ornamental patterns.

The first point to be made is that the distinction between the studies on ornamental patterns and landscape representations is largely artificial. Combining natural elements, the landscape views are also submitted to a process of reduction within the search for a regionalist style; and this search focused on landscape involves its experiential quality. What I am suggesting is that, in translating landscape into a compositional play of zigzag lines, vertical axes and axial arrangements, its experiential dimension seems to be understood as a regionalist symbol. Moreover, some of these

31 This element has been noted by Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 68.



FIG. 53 Jeanneret. Study, 1904. (FLC1940)

FIG. 54 Jeanneret. Study, n.d. (FLC2016-R)

studies suggest that the process of reduction applied to landscape helped Jeanneret to conceptualize the experience of meandering ascent and large vistas as a paradigmatic expression of the Jura Mountains.

With regard to the distinction between landscape representation and ornamental studies, one may start by noting that the process of geometric reduction involves itself a temporal ordering of events. A significant aspect of Jeanneret's work is the habit of placing several studies together on the same sheet. This mainly results from a method of research based on the continuous repetition of the same motif from different angles and distances. Sekler has suggested that some of these cases relate to the sequential ordering of events associated with the experience of walking throughout the mountains. Adducing the case of the sheet FLC2016 (fig. 54), the author has stated:

“The differences in the viewpoints of the two sketches and the distinct differences shown in the geological formations indicate that Jeanneret probably moved his position before sketching the second view. If this is true, then this sheet is of note for proving that his experience of the mountains led to an awareness of the sequential experience of space; these drawings predate any others known to the author which exhibit the same sequential awareness applied to urban or architectural form.”<sup>32</sup>

32 Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 64. These sequential views may be also related with Rodolphe Töpffer, a nineteenth-century Swiss illustrator whose work anticipates the “comic strip”. The connection between Töpffer's illustrated stories and Jeanneret was pointed out by von Moos, to whom Albert Jeanneret told that his younger brother's earliest drawings were made while reading Töpffer's *Voyage en zigzag*. By the end of the journey to the East, Jeanneret was still interested in Töpffer to the point of thinking of writing a doctoral thesis on him. Later on, in 1921, Le Corbusier would publish an article in *L'Esprit nouveau* associating Töpffer's picture books with the cinema. See von Moos, “Voyages en Zigzag,” in *LC Before LC*, 23-43; De Fayet [pseud.], “Toepffer, précurseur du cinéma,” in *L'Esprit nouveau* nos. 11-12 (1921), 1336-1343. In addition see von Moos, “Architecture and Grand Tourism,” in Benton et al., *Le Corbusier and the Architecture of Reinvention* (London: Architectural Association, 2003), 155-175; “À Propos de Venise,” in *L'Italie de Le Corbusier* (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, Éditions de la Villette, 2010), 76-87.



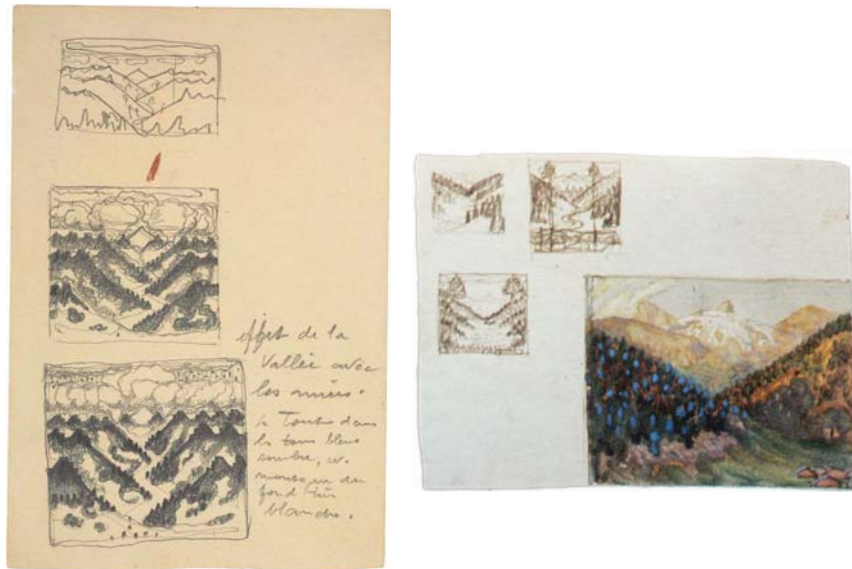


FIG. 55 Jeanneret. Study, n.d. (FLC1748-R)  
 FIG. 56 Jeanneret. Study, circa 1904-1905 (FLC2210)

As for the reduction of landscape into geometric patterns, one may find it in cases such as the sheets FLC 1748 and FLC 2210 (fig. 55, 56), showing several studies of a valley with a sequence of sloping hills, one falling behind the other alternately left and right. The zigzag stream at the bottom is submitted to an axial composition pointing to a peak in a central position. The basic principle at work is the process of stylization of form in an attempt to reduce landscape to a bi-dimensional pattern. This kind of work led to a repertoire of zigzag patterns which can be found in the ornamental work of the Villa Fallet, such as the gable's sgraffito, the wooden ceiling of the double-height hall, or its parquet floor pattern. What we see here, however, is not the reduction of a single element to an ornamental pattern, but that of a whole landscape view, achieved through a projection of the alternate hills. This is particularly clear when compared with the ornamental pattern of the Villa Fallet's gable, representing a vertical projection of a series of rows of firs alternately disposed on a slope (fig. 57).

This attitude has clear affinities with the compositional principles of some of Jeanneret's landscape representations. In his earliest surviving graphic work, a design for an art school diploma, depth is once more emphasized by the juxtaposition of foreground and background, while a radiating hatch fills in the sky evoking the rays of the sun behind the mountains at the far horizon (fig. 58). The use of a similar device can also be found in an undated drawing by L'Eplattenier (fig. 59). But whereas in L'Eplattenier the radiating hatch creates a rather literal halo, Jeanneret seems to have applied it to endow the drawing with a certain Ruskinian sense of mystery, evoking the unseen horizon beyond the horizontal ridge in the background. In this composition, then, we find an experiential dimension and a compositional play of horizontal and vertical elements in the background and foreground respectively.

This play of horizontal and vertical displayed by the confrontation of a mountain

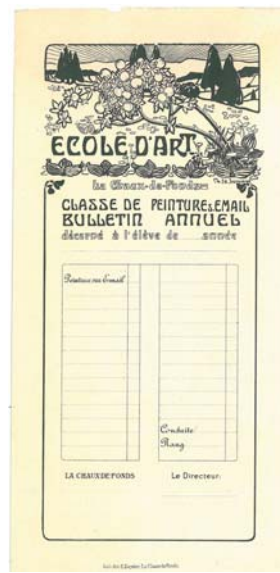


FIG. 57 Villa Fallet. South façade. Detail.

FIG. 58 Jeanneret. Design for the diploma of the school of arts, circa 1903-1904.

peak or a fir and the horizon appears frequently in his work, bridging between pictorial composition and geometric reduction, between landscape representation and ornamental pattern, and between landscape experience and regionalist expression. Cases such as the watercolor FLC2208 (fig. 60) reveal the extent of these connections. The centre of the composition is dominated by a single pine tree at middle distance. An axial space is now defined by the alternate position of the trunks on both sides, creating a subtle zigzag rhythm ending in the central tree. The stylized representation of the pools of sunlight on the floor indicates that the beholder is under the tree's foliage, subtly evoking a covered space—a shelter. The thumbnail sketch at the top left of the sheet confirms it by showing some branches in the foreground. Above the central tree, in the background, a mountain peak in the high horizon emphasizes the triangular shape, although the horizontality prevails, enhanced by the upper edge of the dark blue area of the valley. The perspective indicates that the pine tree is on a sloping terrain and that the beholder is in a higher position, thus associating the faint zigzag rhythm of the natural elements with the view from a high point of the terrain.

The thumbnail sketch further indicates that the real view opened onto the valley with no obstruction, which means that Jeanneret rearranged reality by introducing the central tree. Its scale and differences in representation seem to confirm it. This illuminates the dual quality of the study, exploring both graphic and experiential aspects. On the one hand, the scale and location of the central tree amplify the sloping of the ground, dramatizing the difference of level between the beholder and the trees down in the valley and intensifying the perspective's depth by marking the middle distance, conveying a succession of spaces. Like in drawing FLC1940 (fig. 53), the central element brings the foreground space to an end; and despite the subtle zigzag rhythm of the trunks, that space is read as an axial arrangement. These suggestions of slope and

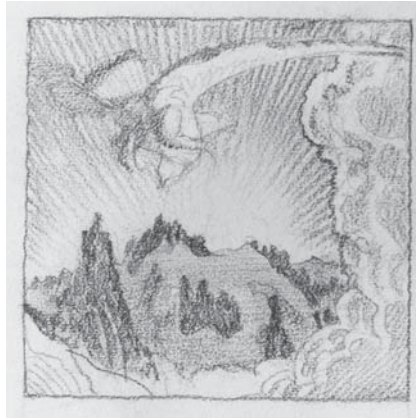


FIG. 59 L'Eplattenier. Study, n.d.  
 FIG. 60 Jeanneret. Watercolor, 1904. (FLC2208)

successive spaces, in turn, evoke the ascent through the woods that preceded the view here represented. On the other hand, several details reveal the ornamental research, suggesting that the reductive process operates at the level of both natural single elements and the whole landscape seen from the top of a mountain, much as the cases of the alternate hills. The most obvious is the introduction of the tree itself, a privileged regionalist symbol in Jeanneret's ornamental work, emphasizing the counterpoint between the verticality and the horizon. More subtle is the stepped pyramid defining its outline, later adopted in the representation of the trees in the gable's sgraffito of the Villa Fallet. Also, the suppression of the upper branches on the foreground trees indicates the intent to reduce the trees to a simpler graphic scheme defined by the vertical lines of the trunks. A parallel might be established with the vertical bars of the wooden bracket supports developing along the Villa Fallet's gable. Lastly, as noted by Baker, the chequered pattern advocated by Ruskin is applied to the stylization of the pools of sunlight, a pattern equally adopted in Fallet's gable.<sup>33</sup> Like in the watercolor, this pattern forms the base of the gable's overall composition at the Villa Fallet.

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If drawings such as fig. 55 and 56 show that the landscape served as a basis for the ornamental research, then, this last case shows that its experiential dimension also partakes of the process of reduction to essentials involved in this research. Moreover, this experiential quality informs the ornamental work of the Villa Fallet. For having in mind this parallel with the villa's south façade, one may say that, if the gable's ornamental pattern represents the Jura landscape (the vertical projection of a wooded slope), the whole façade evokes the bodily experience of the view under the treetops—

33 Baker, *Creative Search*, 52.



the treetops being represented by the projecting hipped-gable roof, the trunks by the wooden bracket supports, and the filtered light by the bottom chequered pattern. In sum, the ornamental work of the Villa Fallet's gable incorporates and evokes a paradigmatic experiential dimension of the Jura landscape.

Through the sample of drawings above discussed, we have seen that Jeanneret's drawings have a dual quality, exploring both graphic and experiential aspects of the landscape. Beyond the research of depthless geometries for ornamental patterns, space, depth, rhythm and time are remarkably present in his early work. And the process of reduction applied to the landscape may have helped him to conceptualize the meandering ascent ending in an axial gaze towards the far horizon as a paradigmatic regionalist expression. Eventually, it seems, the graphic reduction into zigzag patterns and axial arrangement seems to have conceptually informed the spatial experience of the Villa Fallet itself, where the meandering ascent realigns with the landscape view after merging in the architectural axis.

### AN INTERMEDIATE STAGE IN THE DESIGN FOR THE VILLA FALLET

An intermediate stage in the design of the Villa Fallet will help us to substantiate what I proposed—that the Jura landscape represented ornamentally on the façades also came to inform the architectural and spatial conception, through an exploration of the meandering ascent leading to the landscape view from the apex. I will base my argument on an intermediate study drawing suggesting a shift in the design's conceptual argument at a late stage.

Before analyzing this drawing, mention must be made of the way L'Eplattenier's teaching program involved the analogy between landscape and architectural experience. This is particularly explicit in the no longer extant music room added to Albert Matthey-Doret's house, to the west of L'Eplattenier's, one of the first works in which L'Eplattenier's group had the chance to explore architectural ornament. Chapallaz drew the plans between December 1905 and February 1906, and the work took place throughout the summer and into the autumn, while Jeanneret was designing the Villa Fallet. The students of the Cours Supérieur, including Jeanneret, were responsible for the interior decoration.<sup>34</sup> The regular inner space developed along an axis defined by a narrow entrance corridor with steps on one side and a picture window with wooden framing on the opposite side (fig. 61, 62). The presence of the landscape provided by

<sup>34</sup> See Brooks, *Formative Years*, 86-87.



FIG. 61 Matthey-Doret's music room. View towards the picture window.

FIG. 62 Matthey-Doret's music room. View towards the entry.

the unusual dimensions of the window dominates the room, extending the longitudinal axis beyond and contrasting with the narrow entrance.<sup>35</sup> An orthogonal axis at the central area of the room, defining the sitting area and that of the piano and organ, was marked by a fireplace on the north wall, its counterpart on the opposite side not being identifiable. The walls and ceiling evoke two rows of trees in which the vertical wooden cladding conveys the trunks, the motifs worked into the plaster of the upper surfaces of the walls convey the foliage, and the ceiling provides both the tree top boughs, by its wooden beams, and the foliage, by its ornament. The emphasis on the axial development by means of the rhythm of the beams, lamps, the cladding's vertical pattern and remaining ornament is clear. So is the idea of recreating a forest environment.

This analogy between built space and natural environment was not an isolated case. Another example is the interior decoration of the chapel of Fontainemelon, executed concurrently to the works of Fallet's house.<sup>36</sup> The president of the Communal Council of the school described it as follows:

“The program chosen by the students who had conceived the project of the decoration was this: in the middle of a forest all is calm and silent; one only sees the sky in raising one's eyes; all around pine trees form by their branches a tapestry rich in designs and in colors, joined to the earth by columns, the vertical of trunks; lower down the plants, their flowers form the most agreeable carpet. The calm is complete; the attention is involuntarily attracted to the sky in which the “Cross” appears resplendent with light.”<sup>37</sup>

The emphasis on ornament as something endowing the space with a forest atmosphere leaves no doubt as to the significance of such theme, meaning that space was

<sup>35</sup> Sekler noted that the size of the window, which must have measured almost two meters square, was unusual for domestic use. Sekler, “Open Hand,” 47.

<sup>36</sup> The journal of Jeanneret's father refers that in April 1907 his son was “directing the restoration of a chapel at Cernier”. In September 1907 the work was finished as a delegation from the commission of the art school inspected the completed chapel. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 89-90.

<sup>37</sup> “École d'Art de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Rapport de la Commission 1907-1908,” quoted in Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 132. For the full report see *ibid.*, Appendix I, item 6, 360-361.

a topic of debate within L'Eplattenier's group, simultaneously substantiating the forest analogy of the Villa Fallet's hall. Even if the role of Jeanneret in the architectural design of the music room has never been clearly determined, he did work on the interior decoration, and one hardly fails to notice the close affinities with some of his earlier drawings.<sup>38</sup> This is particularly evident in the sheet FLC 1940 (fig. 53), in which the space and narrative suggested are quite close in conception to the ones of the music room. The similarities are especially evident in the axial development of space, the rhythm established by the rows of trees, or the similitude between the picture window and the middle ground element of the drawing, both defining a threshold and imparting the sense of unfolding spaces.<sup>39</sup>

Both the music room and the chapel decoration show how the experiences of L'Eplattenier's group, its imagery, and its collective interchanges influenced Jeanneret's early approach to architecture, substantiating the analogy underlying the Villa Fallet. And yet, the axial arrangement of these examples differs from the Villa Fallet, where the meandering ascent and circulation merges with the architectural axis at the top. While the Villa Fallet adopts the metaphorical analogy with the natural space, I suggested that it also proposes a broader narrative that resonates with the Jura landscape experience such as portrayed in his watercolors. Although we know little about the design process, an intermediate study drawing suggests a shift in the design's conceptual argument at a late stage. Based on this drawing, I will propose that the shift reflects the growing importance of the narrative of ascent.

The study drawing I refer to is a particularly illuminating watercolor of the south façade (fig. 63). The general features of the final version are already present at this stage. They correspond to a conceptual argument based on the stylized representation of the silhouette of a fir tree, in which the gable's triangular shape evokes the treetop and the ground floor windows represent the trunk from which the ornament of the gable spring forwards like branches. This is reflected in the brown and green background, conveying a surrounding bunch of trees. The floor joists suggest that the receding of the façade on the ground floor was already present at this moment, emphasizing the distinction between the two parts, while the rough masonry wall of the cellar would evoke the rocky soil at which the fir's roots clutch.<sup>40</sup> The background of the loggias is treated as if the voids were not interrupted by the rear volumes, emphasizing the tree-like silhouette.

<sup>38</sup> See Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 127-128.

<sup>39</sup> The similarities suggest that the drawing may be mistakenly dated 1904, and it may be related with the conception of the music room.

<sup>40</sup> Sekler has argued that the projection of the gable from the level of the wall below provides a shadow to delimit its base and to give emphasis to its triangular shape, reproducing the silhouette of the pine tree. Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 124.

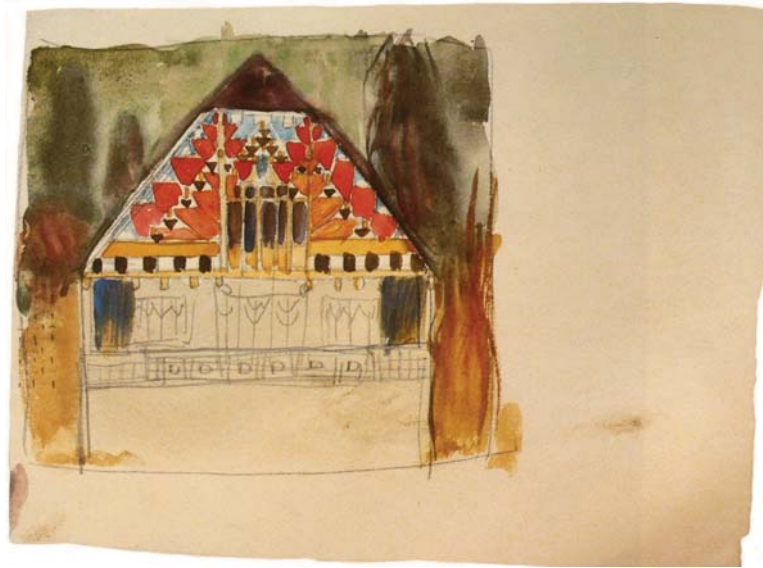


FIG. 63 Jeanneret. Villa Fallet. South façade. Study, n.d.

The ground floor and the cellar remained unpainted, betraying some revealing hesitations. Notice the absence of the central protruding volume of the basement. Also, the ground floor's central French window is in the wall's plane, for there are no traces of the bay window's structure, corbelled stones, or rails of the upper floor balcony. At the main level, the rail's design at the centre differs from the ones drawn on the sides, matching with the masonry parapets of the original built version. While the opaque parapets on the sides seem to contradict the tree-like silhouette, they suggest that the view from the house was already associated with the longitudinal axis at this stage. The French window seems to confirm it. It is perhaps worth adding that the flat plane of the cellar would have echoed the garden's straight masonry walls. Lastly, the gable's ornamental pattern of the built version lost the radial structure of the watercolor, indicating an ornamental progression from figurative towards abstract representation, but also, we have seen, the consideration of the landscape experiential dimension.

The change in the figurative representation suggests a broader change of attitude to the figurative nature of the overall design; and the fact that the study remained unpainted suggests that, at this juncture, Jeanneret was questioning the bi-dimensionality of the façade. Put more forcefully, one may suspect that it was the consideration of the landscape experience that led him to question this bi-dimensionality, triggering the changes to the final version. At the very least, we are seeing a significant shift, as the initial pictorial and ornamental arguments evolved towards a more architectural one: the initial depth relationship between the top floor and ground floor façades became far more complex, echoing the garden's rhythm and seemingly expressing dynamic inner tensions southwards. If indeed this play of receding and protruding planes and volumes are an expression of the inner tensions associated with the metaphorical nar-

rative that I pointed in the previous section, it can be argued that, eventually, the experiential argument prevailed over the figurative representation.

That Jeanneret submitted the design to a narrative driving idea is substantiated by the bay window, rooted in the English country houses.<sup>41</sup> By applying one single bay window in one single floor, creating a balcony above it and locating it on the main axis of the building, Jeanneret reinforced the axial directionality of the south façade, expressing the inner dynamic tensions on the exterior. It is particularly interesting to equate this directional dynamic of the façade with the location of the fireplace, suggesting that its initial key role in the design was equally submitted to this overriding idea. In L'Eplattenier's house, the fireplace was located in a cozy secondary space defining a sitting area which extends the main space of the living room, resonating with the English model and the conception of the house as a shelter-enclosure and fire. In the Villa Fallet, the fireplace is in a central location, which, Passanti has shown, coincides with the intersection of the diagonals of the enveloping rectangle which defines the geometric ordering principle of the house.<sup>42</sup> While this seems to endow it with a major conceptual and symbolic importance, its low key role can be inferred from the overall final layout. Despite the central location, on axis with the bay window, the final layout left it between a corner and the entrance door, which does not provide either much space or a privileged focus point. In addition, the opening direction of the door imprints a secondary role on it, indicating a greater concern with the diagonal axis pointing to the view provided by the corner window. This suggests that the fireplace lost significance during the design process and that, in the final version, it is justified more by a functional reason than by a conceptual one. One is tempted to think that Jeanneret sought to eliminate every inner centripetal focus of attention so that the narrative arrangement of spaces could fully develop southwards, where the main dynamic tensions emerge with their full strength.

The point to be made, then, is that the design became submitted to this narrative driving idea, which improved the design's consistency and the clarity of the project as a whole. If in formal and compositional terms this is expressed in the façade's directional dynamic, at a deeper level, this shift implies a closer integration of the house

<sup>41</sup> Jeanneret had access to a codified English imagery through profusely illustrated books such as Charles Holme's special issue of the periodical magazine *The Studio*, probably bought at L'Eplattenier's request. Charles Holme, ed., *Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration* (London and Paris and New York: The Studio, 1901). See no. 398 in the catalogue of the art school.

<sup>42</sup> Passanti, "Architecture," 77, fig.88, 288n20. It is worth noting that the concept of a centered fireplace scheme was familiar to Jeanneret. The farmhouses of the Jura region, which he very much praised, were structured around a central windowless room with a fireplace and chimney, conceived as the gathering place of the family. Jeanneret drew these farmhouses in his youth and he would choose to live in one of these twice, after his Parisian sojourn and his journey to the East. I will return to this farmhouse type in chap. 4.



and garden, so that the house (and especially its hall) acts as a pivot in the garden's narrative. This explains the already suggested consistency of the experience provided by the house and the garden, from the side entrance—effacing the transition between exterior and interior—to the internalization of the meandering ascent by means of a convoluted circulation, realigning with the architectural axis along which the eyes are led to travel beyond. The house is thought of as a vital episode within a larger temporal experience, in which one recognizes the experiential pattern of Jeanneret's landscape representations.

Summing up, this study drawing suggests that Jeanneret found the conceptual argument of the Villa Fallet's design in the meandering ascent merging with the architectural axis. The conceptual argument thus shifted from the initial figurative representation of the fir tree to an experiential narrative expressing the Jura landscape experience. Ultimately, the differences between Jeanneret's first architectural work and L'Eplattenier's house reflect the influence that the experience of the mountains had exerted on Jeanneret. His choice not to follow his master or the previous architectural rehearsals of the art school such as the Matthey-Doret music room shows the extent of the intentionality of his design and explains the experiential narrative underlying it.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The shift in the design's conceptual argument proposed in the preceding section raises the question of the theoretical frameworks that allowed Jeanneret to move from landscape experience to the architectural conception of the Villa Fallet. Here I address this question by focusing on three main aspects of the house, associated with three authors: the house's integration in the overall narrative itinerary, discussed through the influence of Charles Blanc; the house as a spatial structure conceived with reference to the organic structure of a tree and the subsequent spiraling quality of space, owing particularly to Ruskin; the directionality of the house associated with the encounter with the landscape, considered in the light of Gottfried Semper.

58

Jeanneret's integration of the house in the overall narrative experience seems to have found support in Blanc's discourse on garden design, which reflects a broader nineteenth-century debate, namely the attempt to reconcile the aesthetic category of the picturesque and a formal garden layout, on the one hand, and the coordination of house and garden on the other.

From the late eighteenth century, the English Landscape garden had spread throughout Europe. In La Chaux-de-Fonds, which was not an exception, it was very

popular by the early twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> The theoretical debate was informed by the English late nineteenth-century debate which, opposing the formal garden to the landscape garden, involved arguments on the unity and articulation of house and garden.<sup>44</sup> Sequential arrangements of individual parts (“a series of outdoor apartments”), terraced areas, or a progressive formal dominance next to the house were common arguments when discussing the role of the garden as intermediary between the house and the surrounding landscape.<sup>45</sup> Gertrude Jekyll, for instance, argued for a progressively formal treatment next to the house, introducing the concept of woodland garden (an alternative to the artificial reproduction of nature found in the landscape style) consisting of unchanged natural areas to be set next to other areas of geometrical layout. Also, for her, formal design and the consideration of native vegetation and environment found a common ground in a painterly inspiration.<sup>46</sup> And Muthesius, in *Das englische Haus*, which concerns not only the English country house but also its garden design, emphasized the formal design and argued for an intimate formal and functional relationship between the house and garden.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, this interdependence was put in terms of space experience. In his historical survey of the English garden, for instance, Muthesius referred to the particular value that Elizabethan architecture–

43 Peter Wulschleger, “The Garden of the Villa Jeanneret-Perret,” in Klaus Spechtenhauser and Arthur Rüegg, eds., *Maison Blanche, History and Restoration of the Villa Jeanneret-Perret, 1912-2005* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007), 147.

44 A vast body of literature strongly involved the country house garden and partially questioned the reproduction of nature as the main feature of garden design. The discussion on the geometrical layout was gaining weight through the influence of architects. Adherents of the formal garden criticized landscape gardeners for destroying the English formal gardens. The envisaged unity of house and garden required, in their own optical, a geometrical layout. This idea of unity, common to several authors, was put both in formal and functional terms. See, for instance, Reginald Blomfield and Francis Inigo Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England* (London: Macmillan, 1892).

45 Thomas H. Mawson is a paradigmatic example of this debate. He endorsed the connection between the house and the garden, although his commitment to formal design preserved an interest in the landscape style. Being in accordance with the site, the country house garden should articulate the house and the site through a sequential arrangement of individual parts, if possible terraced areas, with a progressive dominance of formal design next to the house: “A garden should impress the spectator as being a place for flowers rather than shrubs, and should always have cared-for appearance ... The arrangement should suggest a series of outdoor apartments rather than a panorama which can be grasped in one view: art is well directed in arousing curiosity, ‘always inviting further exploration, to be rewarded with new but never a final discovery’ ... A garden ought also to proclaim itself as having been made for the accommodation and enjoyment of nature’s bountiful supplies; serving the double purpose of foreground to the landscape when seen from the house, and as a base or setting to the house when viewed from the surrounding country: briefly, it is the link which connects the house and landscape ... Ground devoted to gardens should be treated in the simplest and most direct manner; the different gardens being arranged, if possible, in levels to suit the sections of the ground, and outside there should be, not closely shaven lawns, but wild gardens ...” Thomas H. Mawson, *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1900), 16-19.

46 “Ever since it came to me to feel some little grasp of knowledge of means and methods, I have found that my greatest pleasure, both in garden and woodland, has been in the enjoyment of beauty of a pictorial kind.” Gertrude Jekyll, *Wood and Garden* (London: Longman, Greens, 1899), 196.

47 Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, vol. 1 (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), 210. First published as *Das englische Haus: Entwicklung, Bedingungen, Anlage, Aufbau, Einrichtung und Innenraum* (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth, 1904). See also Uwe Schneider, “Hermann Muthesius and the Introduction of the English Arts & Crafts Garden to Germany,” in “Reviewing the Twentieth-Century Landscape,” *Garden History*, vol. 28, no. 1, (Summer, 2000): 57-72.

which he regarded as the golden age of English formal garden design—had placed “on a worthy approach to the house.”<sup>48</sup> Other publications of the early century reflected the general features of the English debate, arguing, for instance, that the house should be reckoned to be a vital feature in the definition of fully effective views.<sup>49</sup>

Evidence that Jeanneret was aware of the contemporary debate on garden design and its attempt to reconcile the two main models—the English landscape garden and the French formal garden—is found in Fallet’s garden. The intent to achieve unity through a close formal and functional relationship between the garden and the house, the articulating role of the garden in establishing a continuity between the landscape and the house, the combination of the enclosed zigzag pathway and platforms opening to the view, the formal dominance next to the house, or the magnifying of the landscape qualities, reflect some of the major theoretical arguments of the contemporary debate.

What interests us here is the integration of Fallet’s house and garden in a single narrative experience. The source that probably helped Jeanneret the most with dealing with it is Blanc’s *Grammaire*. Expressing a similar view, Blanc introduces both the French formal garden and the English landscape garden, concluding that what best accomplishes the spirit of the time is a combination of order and of a certain degree of freedom, advocating three principles for garden making. The first is the reconciling of the English and French models. The garden must not imitate nature but rather accuse the intervention of art, reconciling symmetry and contrast, regularity and surprise. The curve and the straight line must reconcile their geometries with the freedom of nature, giving order to the designer’s thought. The garden must then make the transition between nature and the rules of order, of proportion, and of number to which the design of the house is submitted, giving continuity to the architectural rhythm. Within the intended unity of architecture and garden, the latter is seen as an exterior compartment for leisure, where man must first of all find the pleasure of the promenade and that of repose. The second principle argues that a garden outside the urban fabric must be in accordance with its environment, must consult the *genius loci* and be conceived in accordance with it. It must therefore be seen as one of the several parts which constitute nature, seeking continuity within the natural environment. Finally, to express art and simultaneously attend to the local natural environment, the architect must

48 “The house was always clearly related to this garden, forming what was regarded as an indispensable transition to the real natural world of nature, generally with a terrace leading down to the garden ... Particular value was placed on a worthy approach to the house.” *Ibid.*, 1:52.

49 See, for instance, Holme, “The Principles of Garden-Making,” in *The gardens of England in the Southern and Western Counties*, Holme ed. (London and Paris and New York: The Studio, 1907), xxii-xxx. A copy of this book was available at the library of the art school. See no. 410 in the catalogue of the art school. Having been published in 1907, it most probably had no influence in the Villa Fallet’s design, but it shows the wide spreading of the English debate.

select and accentuate the natural characteristics of the place. Rousseau is obviously associated with this view: his *true and profound sentiment of nature*, Blanc stresses, is at the basis of the landscape garden's return to nature.<sup>50</sup>

Significantly, Blanc's discussion on the advantages of either the geometric garden—submitted to architecture—or the picturesque garden—relating to the viewpoint of the landscape painter—rests on fundamental assumptions of picturesque aesthetic, namely those of a design based on variety and path: an experience of sequential varied asymmetrical “pictures” or balanced views as one moves along an irregular terrain, creating a succession of foreground scenes continuously redefining the relation of the promeneur with the entire view. Put in terms of bodily space perception attained by the perspective offered to the human eye, Blanc's discourse evaluates garden design through the effect resulting from the combination of perceptual experience and movement, being implicitly understood that the *promeneur* is the main protagonist and that the promenade is the main programmatic goal of garden design. Once the horizon moves with each movement of the promeneur, he claims, the architect must not focus on a sole landscape view, but on several different views.

Two aspects interests us particularly within Blanc's attempt to reconcile this model with the formal garden. First, in claiming that the garden must offer striking beauties to the promeneur at least at the departure and at the return, he discusses the picturesque temporal experience in narrative terms, that is, he suggests a narrative structure, an ordering principle structuring the sequential pictorial views. Secondly, he imprints a fundamentally nineteenth-century idea on this experience, namely that aesthetic pleasure requires the satisfaction of heart and mind. The picturesque experience relates to a bodily experience and a mental one as well. So Blanc holds that garden design consists of the introduction of order in the free creations of nature in order to produce the pleasures of the view, of the sentiment, and of the spirit. Significantly, both aspects—bodily and mental experience—are recognizable in the narrative pattern of Jeanneret's landscape representations.

The case can be made, then, that having identified a paradigmatic experiential pattern of the Jura Landscape through his ornamental research and landscape representations, Jeanneret could recognize it in the principles of garden design advocated

<sup>50</sup> Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts du dessin, architecture, sculpture, peinture* (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1867), 324-248. A copy of Blanc's books was available to Jeanneret at the library of the art school. See no. 258 in the catalogue of the art school. A letter to his parents indicates that he had first read Blanc around 1904 and that in 1907 he owned a copy of his own. Jeanneret to parents, 8 October 1907, repr. in *Le Corbusier, correspondance : Lettres à la famille 1900-1925*, vol. 1, ed. Rémi Baudouï and Arnaud Dercelles (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2011), 1:49-58. Rousseau was one of the main influential figures in Switzerland, to whom Jeanneret had been exposed since elementary school. On this see Adolf Max Vogt, *Le Corbusier, The Noble Savage*, trans. Radka Donnell (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1998), originally published as *Le Corbusier, der edle Wilde* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1996).

by Blanc. He would therefore easily accommodate Blanc's discourse upon this pattern, and conceive of the Villa Fallet's design as an experiential narrative involving the site, the garden and the house. Within this narrative, the meandering ascent was submitted to the picturesque principles—prospect—while the house became a vital feature in the narrative by merging the winding ascent with the architectural axis, visually extended at the top, and thus enacting the feelings of refuge and mental projection.

This leads us to a second theoretical influence, concerning the house as a spatial structure conceived with reference to the organic pattern of growth of a tree, and how the inner tensions embodied in this conception relates to the house's experience. For this we must return to Ruskin.

Jeanneret's concern with the growth of natural elements, its structure, and proportions, resurfaces in numerous of his early drawings. Studies of leaves, trees or rocks show a methodological concern with the representation and understanding of their inner structure and pattern of growth. This is the case of the sketch showing the study of angles of growth defined by branches and the way they develop along the main trunk of a tree, providing the conic form (fig. 64). The Ruskinian connections of this theme have been explored by Sekler, who has pointed out the resemblance between this study and Ruskin's drawing in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, illustrating the spiral form that results from the pattern of growth of the "Scotch fir."<sup>51</sup>

The problem of radial form underlying the order of plants and their vital structure—governing their growth and defining their outer shape—is equally discussed in the "laws of arrangement" of *The Elements of Drawing*.<sup>52</sup> For Ruskin, the most simple and perfect way to connect lines in a composition is by radiation, that is, by making them spring from one point or closing towards it, creating a harmony which is almost always present in nature. The most significant example is the general tendency of boughs of trees to spring forwards and to indicate simultaneously their origin from one root. Through this movement, nature expresses an encompassing limit, which gives form to the tree, and through which it acquires unity, since all the boughs are bound by a common law enforcing unison of action. Ruskin further developed this theme, defining the Law of Radiation, one of four laws underlying trees: support from one living root; radiation, or tendency of force from one given point; liberty of each bough to seek its

51 Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 85-91; idem., "Open Hand," 42-95. The drawing mentioned is the sheet FLC1769. For Ruskin's drawing see Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5:83.

52 Even if the essence of composition was for Ruskin a product of individual mind, thus being impossible to establish its rules, he defined a group of "laws of arrangement" to assist the artist in setting forth a good composition. The main aim underlying these laws is to achieve unity. These are the laws of (1) Principality, (2) Repetition, (3) Continuity, (4) Curvature, (5) Radiation, (6) Contrast, (7) Interchange, (8) Consistency, and (9) Harmony. Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 167-218



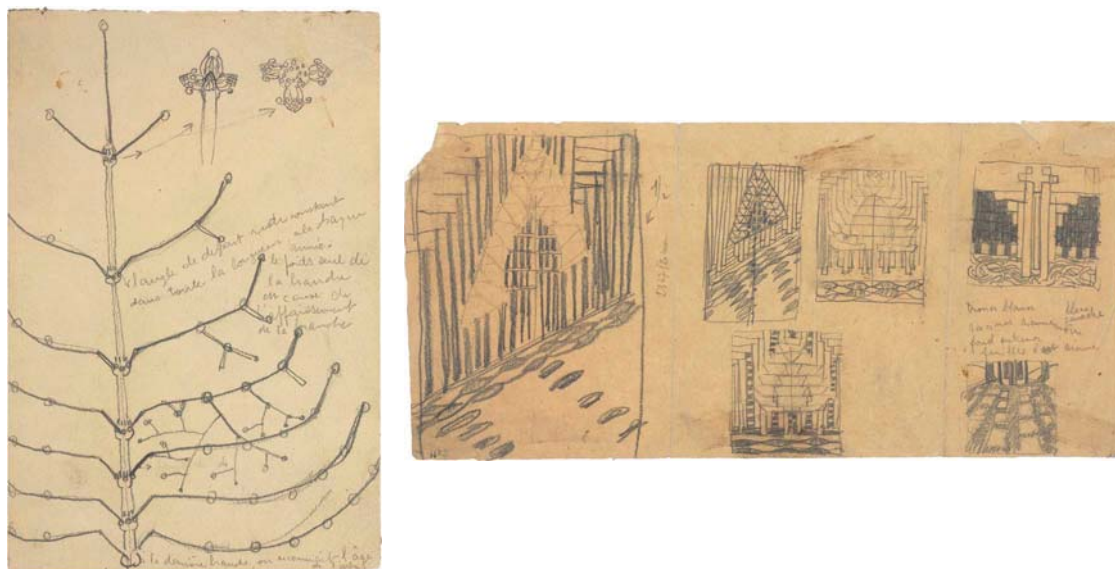


FIG. 64 Jeanneret. Study on the angles of growth defined by the branches of a tree, 1905. (FLC2517-R)

FIG. 65 Jeanneret. Study on ornamental patterns based on fir trees, n.d. (FLC2511-R)

own livelihood; imperative requirement of each bough to stop within certain limits.<sup>53</sup> Sekler quoted these principles with regard to the decoration of the chapel of Fontaine-melon. But at the Villa Fallet, they seem to have been thought of in spatial terms.

Looking at the double-height hall, one may understand it as a vertical axis developing from the ground floor to the attic, generating a radial distribution and a hierarchical ascending succession of spaces. The impulse prompted by this central “trunk” is extended outwards through the view provided by the windows of each of the rooms, the centrifugal dynamic gesture gaining particular expression in the general adoption of the elevated sitting areas, in the corner windows of the ground-floor rooms, or in the spiral-like stairs and peripheral wooden gallery. A study of decorative patterns seems to sustain this analogy (fig. 65). On the left side of the sheet, Jeanneret drew a fir standing straight on sloping terrain, with the vertical trunk generating a central void crossed by the boughs. It is tempting to establish a parallel between this analysis of the tree’s structure and the central void of the house. In accepting it, less evident and more abstract analogies may perhaps be drawn. The boughs crossing the central void, for instance, could be compared with the wooden upper gallery leading to the rooms at the peripheral location, while these form the outer area of enclosed spaces that defines the outer form.

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<sup>53</sup> Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 186-195. Similar approaches were available to Jeanneret, such as Jones’s: “... the basis of all form is geometry, the impulse which forms the surface, starting from the centre with equal force, necessarily stops at equal distances; the result is symmetry and regularity (sic).” The author returns to this idea more than one time. When discussing Greek art, for instance, he wrote: “The three great laws which we find everywhere in nature—radiation from the parent stem, proportionate distribution of the areas, and the tangential curvature of the lines—are always obeyed, and it is the unerring perfection with which they are, in the most humble works as in the highest, which excites our astonishment...” Jones, *Grammar*, 33, 157, *passim*.

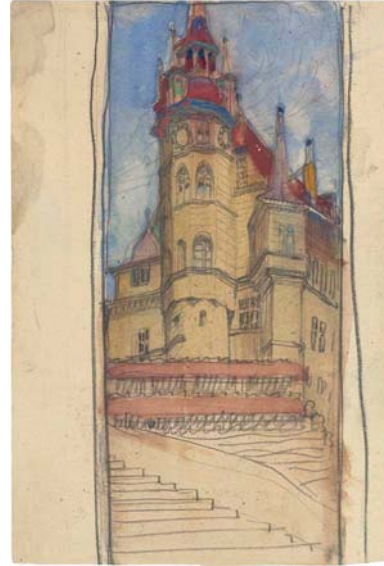
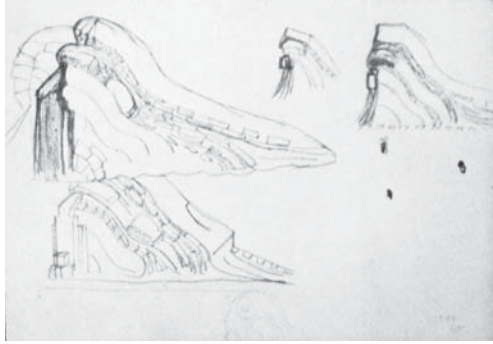


FIG. 66 Jeanneret. Study on outcropping rocks, n.d.  
 FIG. 67 Jeanneret. Fribourg. Hôtel de Ville, 1907.

This parallel suggests that Jeanneret translated Ruskin’s structural and formal analogy into a spatial one. The architectural analogy of the spiral tendency of boughs of a tree is suggested by Ruskin himself in *Modern Painters*: “Such is the mechanical aspect of the tree. The work of its construction, considered as a branched tower, partly propped by buttresses, partly lashed by cables, is thus shared in by every leaf.”<sup>54</sup> Jeanneret, bereft of technical knowledge on construction, could easily displace Ruskin’s structural analogy, reading it in formal terms; and his attention to space experience could also lead him to read the architectural analogy in spatial terms.

What interests us here is not so much the analogy of the tree or the connection between the inner organic tensions of matter and the dynamic quality of form, but the idea that a building is generated by inner tensions, and that Jeanneret may have associated these inner tensions with the experiential dimension of architecture. If, going beyond the mimetic attitude of the facades, Jeanneret thought of the house in terms of the analogy between the pattern of growth of a tree and architectural space, he could easily associate Ruskin’s discourse on the tree’s movement forwards with the driving narrative leading outwards. This would accord well with the dynamic quality of the south facade.

64 In this respect, it is also tantalizing to compare the central protruding volume of the Villa Fallet’s cellar with Jeanneret’s studies of the outcropping of the stratified limestone of the Jura region, expressing the inner vital forces of rock formations through its movement upwards and forwards (fig. 66). The resulting stepped-edge projected into the space can be easily imagined in the context of the experiences provided by

54 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5: 45.

the Jura landscape, offering a privileged viewpoint over the landscape. Such parallel further suggests the association between the organic forces of matter and the narrative experience of the Jura landscape.

That Jeanneret could equate the inner architectural tensions with a broader narrative experience seems to be substantiated by a drawing of the Hôtel de Ville in Fribourg (fig. 67). Done by Jeanneret probably in June 1907, when the Villa Fallet was just being finished, it portrays the front of the building dominated by a vertical central body from which the remaining volumes seem to spring forwards.<sup>55</sup> This drawing indicates that Jeanneret was particularly sensitized to the idea of architecture conceived as a living organism, dominated by a vertical impulse and expressing the radial tensions of the inner arrangement. In hiding the rear development of the building, Jeanneret emphasizes the vertical and radial tensions. In addition, the framing of this drawing implies a meandering ascending approach. Made from a low viewpoint, it partially portrays the stairs in the foreground. The three-quarter view seems to respond to the building's asymmetry, while the oblique line of the stairs extends the building's dynamic tensions to the whole composition, as if portraying the approach to a fir at the top of a slope. The centrifugal tensions of the building are thus read in association with the ascending angled movement, which one may easily imagine ending at one of the upper windows overlooking the landscape. One hardly fails to notice the similarities with the Villa Fallet's protruding volumes and the angled approach from below which Jeanneret asked to be photographed a few months later.

The shift in the conceptual argument of the Villa Fallet that I discussed earlier suggests that, at the time of the shift, the vertical and centrifugal biological impulses were displaced to the axial direction, that is, while the hall maintained its vertical spiraling quality, the focus shifted to the predominance of a main movement southwards. At the obvious level, this is a natural response to the site. At a deeper theoretical level, it is Semper who best expresses the connection between this horizontal axial impulse and the narrative.

Several elements suggest that Semper was also important in the design of the Villa Fallet. This is the case of the placement of the fireplace at the geometric center of the plan, or the exterior's articulation in three independent "elements," stone base, carpentry above, and textile walls. Jeanneret could have heard about Semper from Chapallaz, who was surely aware of his theories.<sup>56</sup> That Semper's ideas equally permeated

<sup>55</sup> For the date of the drawing see Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 170.

<sup>56</sup> I am in debt to Passanti for having called my attention to the possible reading of the villa as three independent "elements" and its possible connections with Semper. Passanti, e-mail message to author, May 3, 2010. Jeanneret's superficial knowledge of Viollet-le-Duc and Semper are mentioned in Passanti, "Toscane," 20-21. Chapallaz started his design career at the office of Pflögard & Häfeli, in Zurich, concurrently attending courses at the Kunstgewerbeschule,

L'Éplattenier's group is suggested by Matthey-Doret's music room, its central fireplace and the textile-like pattern on the plaster of the walls—similar to that of Fallet's east room—resonating with the Semperian concept of “dressing.” In addition, the notion of “dressing” is explored by Semper through that of space enclosure, in which “walling” is regarded as the “spatial motive”—the original motive of architecture, opposing the inner and outer worlds. But more than Semper's “three elements,” what interests us here is another aspect of his approach to the symbolic quality of architecture, in which we may find the theoretical roots of the Villa Fallet's directionality.

In *Prolegomena*, Semper defines “three determinants that can be active in the generation of form,” corresponding “to the three dimensions of height, width, and depth,” associated respectively with symmetry, proportionality and direction. To these concepts he adds that of eurythmy, relating to the balance of a plant achieved by the radial distribution of the mass and branches around the vertical line of the trunk. This defines its centre of gravity, along which the plant grows. This discussion is then equated with the notion of the will power of living organisms. Further on, in the section “Proportionality and Direction (Unity of Movement),” the image of the plant is discussed in terms of the struggle of the organic vital force against matter (gravity), on the one hand, and in terms of will power on the other. This struggle is “more vigorous in organisms gifted with volition,” he goes on to argue, in whom “freedom of will and movement are in balance with the requirements of mass and of life.” Though working in every direction, the organic vital force tends to follow one main direction. In plants, this is the vertical direction, which coincides with the direction of the will. In humans, the organic vital force is equally vertical, but the direction of the will forms a right angle to it. “The human head expresses intelligibly the normal position of these two axes at right angles to each other. It is the symbol of absolute free will.”<sup>57</sup> Put shortly, verticality expresses a vital force and horizontal direction is a symbol of free will.

This last point—direction as a symbol of will and motion—is, in a sense, the translation of Arthur Schopenhauer's *will* into visual physical terms. In this respect, it is worth noting that the association between the vital organic forces of plants and those of men and their symbolic content—the *will*—was by no means unique to Semper. It was reflected, for instance, in anthropomorphic conceptions of architecture, and available to Jeanneret through different sources. Ruskin is one of them. When discussing the “mechanical aspect of the tree,” its inner biological forces—the “ascendant body”—are

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as mentioned in Emery, “Chapallaz *versus* Jeanneret,” 25. During this period he certainly became aware of Semper's theories.

<sup>57</sup> Gottfried Semper, “Prolegomena,” in *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or Practical Aesthetics*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Michael Robinson, with an introduction by Mallgrave (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004), 83-96.

associated with the idea of gesture and human motion: “the balance of the bough of a tree is quite as subtle as that of a figure in motion.” Other passages may be adduced. Discussing the law of radiation, Ruskin compares the boughs’ movement of growth outwards and upwards, and the curve and shape of branches, to an extended hand, held out with the palm upwards to receive something or with the palm downwards to shelter something.<sup>58</sup>

Closer to Semper, Blanc expresses a similar view when discussing the human figure. Like Semper, he compares the vertical axis of the plant, the horizontal axis of the animal, and the reconciling of both in man. The vertical axis, linking the centre of the earth and the sky, divides the human body in two symmetrical parts. This symmetry is endowed with movement forward. It is through the resulting horizontal axis that man communicates and expresses his freedom. The axis thus acquires a spiritual and moral value, and establishes the analogy through which to conceive architecture.<sup>59</sup> Although Blanc seems primarily concerned with legitimating the symmetry of architectural façades, some of Jeanneret’s drawings show comparative studies on the dynamic quality of tree trunks and the human body (fig. 68), providing evidence of Jeanneret’s interest in this parallel. Others explore anthropomorphic compositions in architectural facades which may be read as a first mimetic interpretation of Semper and Blanc’s discussion of the human face (fig. 69).

In spatial terms, we are once more led to Semper, whose notion of eurythmy relates to the articulation of “certain laws of repetition with cadence and caesuras,” like in musical figures (melodies), poetry, or Doric columns: “Eurythmy consists of stringing together uniform segments of space to form an enclosure.”<sup>60</sup> This can be easily as-

58 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5: 45-46, 69. We find echoes of this discourse in some of L’Eplattenier’s studies of the fir tree. See BV CL-105-12, no.3, Fond L’Eplattenier.

59 Some of the most significant passages read: “Le Corps de l’homme, debout sur le sol, est le prolongement d’un rayon du globe, perpendiculaire à l’horizon. L’axe de son corps, parti du ventre de la terre, va rejoindre les cieux. Cette ligne verticale, qui est l’axe, divise le corps de l’homme en deux parties parfaitement symétriques ... Enfin, le corps humain est une machine d’autant plus admirable, que le mécanisme en est évident pour l’esprit ... A chaque instant, cette géométrie vivante est dissimulé par le mouvement ... La figure humaine est donc une parfaite image de cette *eurythmie* qui, chez les Grecs, signifiait l’ensemble de toutes les mesures, la variété des accords contenue dans l’unité du concert ... le végétal s’élèvera de la vie organique à la vie animal, à celle qui doit le mettre en communication avec les êtres environnants ... gouverné par l’instinct, il n’a qu’un semblant de liberté et de vouloir. Il établit des relations, mais il n’a, pour communiquer ses désirs ou ses criantes, qu’une voix, un glapissement, un cri ... l’homme seul a le langage et la mélodie. Le végétal était captif, la bête se mouvait dans le cercle fatal de ses instincts : l’homme seul est libre ... Réduit à de simples lignes, la tête de l’homme, par exemple, a déjà tant d’expression, qu’elle semble donner à ces lignes une valeur de sentiment, qui elle-même pourra déterminer des systèmes entiers d’architecture et les grandes variétés de la physionomie morale des choses ... Dans la tête humaine au repos ... les organes doubles sont disposés sur une même ligne, horizontalement ... En elle, nous retrouverons le code de toutes les proportions, le répertoire de toutes les mesures, l’exemple et la loi de tous les mouvements, le tracé de toutes les courbes, le prototype de tous les arts du dessin. L’architecte y découvre, par analogie, les principes de son art. Pour lui, le corps humain est l’ensemble d’un édifice qui a une façade et deux côtés ; qui est symétrique au dehors, mais non pas au-dedans ...” Blanc, “De la figure humaine,” in *Grammaire*, 26-37.

60 Semper, “Prolegomena,” 83-87.



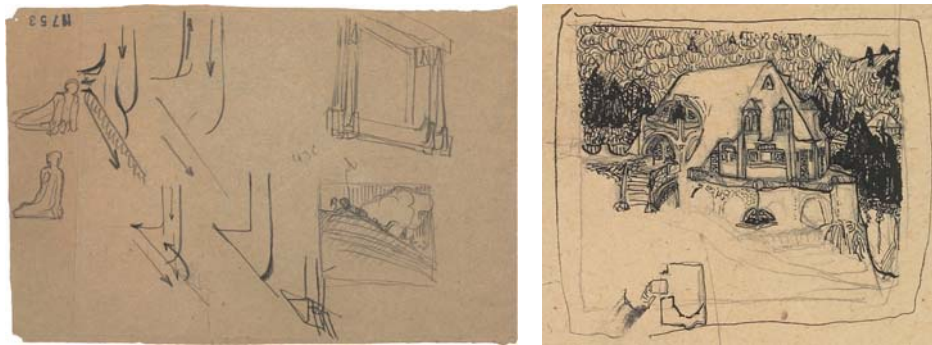


FIG. 68 Jeanneret. Study, n.d. (FLC1753)  
 FIG. 69 Jeanneret. Study. Detail, n.d. (FLC2157-R)

sociated with the directional rhythmic ornamental pattern of Matthey-Doret’s music room, some of Jeanneret’s drawings (fig. 53), or even with studies by L’Eplattenier (fig. 70), exploring the formation of rhythmic longitudinal spaces by means of the association of modular elements, simultaneously bringing to mind natural elements and Arabic architecture.<sup>61</sup> In all these cases, it is possible to recognize Semper’s concept of eurythmy and its association with axial architectural schemes, implying the notion of direction.

The connection between direction and narrative is particularly explicit in the music room. Despite the central location of the fireplace, the ornamental rhythm, symmetry, longitudinal layout and the space are dominated by the picture window, seemingly translating the Semperian notions of direction and will into a rhythmic progression visually extended outwards. Thus understood, the analogy of the forest in the music room implicates a spatial narrative—a metaphorical narrative evoking a natural space developing along an architectural axis. This is further suggested by the inner arrangement. While the program should make us expect a scene dominated by the piano and organ, they were rather placed next to the entrance, flanking it on each side, so that the window could dominate the experience of space.

The predominant direction of the Villa Fallet arose from these ideas, reconciling them with the convoluted development of spaces that expands the rich perceptual possibilities of the tortuous ascent. Through the analogy with the landscape experience, the hall conceived as a “spatial trunk” came to be seen as a clearing in the forest; through its spiraling quality, it solves the articulation of the meandering access and the architectural axis, exploring the association of direction and will.

While, we have seen, this relates to Jeanneret’s interpretation of the Jura landscape experience, Semper also provides the architectural model for such articulation. In discussing *unity of purpose*, or *unity of content*, Semper argues that “*directional orga-*

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<sup>61</sup> The resonance with Arabic architecture was first noted in Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 110. One can hardly help to think here of Le Corbusier’s later association between Arabic architecture and the architectural promenade. Could this association be ultimately rooted in this early period?

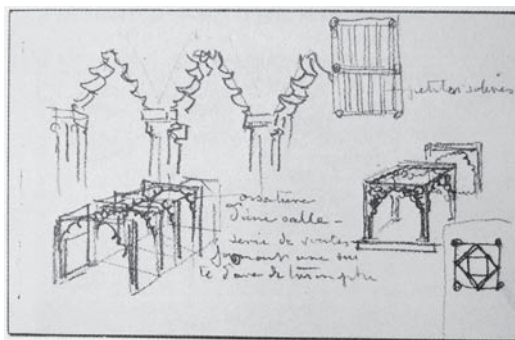


FIG. 70 L'Eplattenier. Study, n.d.

*nization* is the leading principle in many works of the technical arts and architecture.” The cases adduced range from a ship (“which because of this capacity for movement can be developed to a particular high artistic level”), Egyptian processional temples, or Roman Catholic basilicas of the nineteenth century. But “unity of purpose stands out much as it does in humans—in its purest harmony!”—in the “most perfect splendor and great freedom” in the Greek temple. “Athena’s crowning pediment embodies, like the visage of this goddess, the dominance of proportion, the quintessence of symmetry, and the reflection of the approaching sacrificial procession.”<sup>62</sup>

In these last words, architectural direction is thus related to the meandering approach to the temple. If indeed, through Chapallaz, Blanc, or any other source, Semper’s notion of directionality was implicated in the Villa Fallet’s design, its connection with the narrative experience merging the meandering ascent in the architectural axis is highly tantalizing. And just as the overall leaning forward of the house’s volume and composition can be read as an expression of the tree’s organic impulses, so one could see the axial protruding volumes of the south façade as an expression of the horizontal impulse associated with the metaphorical narrative of discovering the horizon under a bunch of trees, that is, as a gestural reflection of a bodily movement towards the landscape view. The cellar is particularly suggestive. Like the outcropping rocks, it is upon it that the fir clutches and rises vertically; as it is from its protruding volume that the horizon and the mountain peaks are revealed to the eye and the spirit.

If this is so, Jeanneret’s design and the underlying metaphorical narrative are endowed with a symbolic, existential meaning through the Semperian discourse—after the ascent, the final contemplation of the horizon merges with the axis, symbol of human volition and free will. This is most probably the root of Le Corbusier’s obsession with the right angle. In architectural terms, this symbolic content is expressed by the vertical axis and direction. In experiential terms, it is enacted through the “regard horizontal” directed towards the horizon, such as that offered at the top of the Villa

62 Semper, “Prolegomena,” 96.

Savoie or such as portrayed in the perspective from the roof terrace of the Ville Contemporaine discussed above. And yet, the “regard horizontal” cannot be thought of independently from the “law of meander”:

La loi du méandre est  
agissante dans la pensée et  
l'entreprise des hommes y foment  
des avatars renaissants  
Mais la trajectoire jaillie  
de l'esprit est projetée par  
les clairvoyants par delà  
la confusion<sup>63</sup>

Significantly, the obsession with the “regard horizontal” and its symbolic content keeps coming back during Jeanneret’s formative years, namely in his reading of the monastery of Karakallou, on Mount Athos (*de nos chambres blanches, la vue horizontale est sans bornes ...*), or in a letter to William Ritter soon after leaving Pisa (*mon regard est horizontal*).<sup>64</sup> Not surprisingly, the paradigmatic case is the directionality of the Parthenon towards the horizon. While, it will be seen, direction was a dominant theme of Jeanneret’s 1911 interpretation of the Acropolis, the key to unlocking this early connection with Le Corbusier is his essay “Architecture III. Pure creation de l’esprit.” Using the Acropolis as an example, Le Corbusier writes about the axis according to which the human body is organized and along which all phenomena and objects of nature align as an expression of a “single will at the origin.” The “moment of accord with the axis” means, he argues, “a return to the general order,” an emotional experience, and “a unity of intention.”<sup>65</sup> Also this axial accord may be rooted in the merging of the Ruskinian inner vital forces of matter and the Semperian direction of will.

If it may be argued, by way of conclusion, that the advance and retreat of planes of the Villa Fallet’s south façade provide human referent, expressing the symbol of human volition embodied in the narrative, would it be wrong to see in its protruding

<sup>63</sup> “The law of meander is / present in thought and / man’s enterprise forms / renewed examples there / But the trajectory springs / from the mind is projected by / farsighted spirits beyond / confusion.” Le Corbusier, “A. 4 Milieu,” in *Le Poème de l’angle droit* (Madrid : Circulo de Artes Plásticas, Fondation Le Corbusier, 2006), 40. For the English translation see Le Corbusier, *Le Poème de l’Angle Droit*, trans. Kenneth Hylton, in Benton et al., *Le Corbusier and The Architecture of Reinvention* (London: Architectural Association, 2001), 66.

<sup>64</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 132; Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 November 1911 (partially quoted in chap. 5).

<sup>65</sup> Le Corbusier-Saunier, “Architecture III, pure création de l’esprit,” *L’Esprit nouveau* no. 16 (May 1922): 1903-1920. Later incorporated in *Vers une architecture*, 165-171. See also chap. 5 and concluding remarks of this work. Note the resemblances with some of Blanc’s passages, such as “la variété des accords contenue dans l’unité du concert.”

volumes the early manifestation of, say, the projecting balcony of the Villa Cook, symbolically condensing a comprehensive narrative articulating the law of meander and the meaningful horizontal gaze?

## NARRATIVE AND MEANING

In this chapter, I have proposed that a shift in the conceptual argument of the Villa Fallet took place during the design. The initial analogy of the tree already surpassed the bi-dimensional figurative representation of the façades, informing the inner arrangement of space through the tree's pattern of growth and through the evocative quality of forest atmosphere. Conceived of as an organic structure, its inner impulses were expressed in the exterior composition. Then, during the design process, came the association with a metaphorical narrative of an ascending promenade leading to the encounter with the south view at the top behind the "tree's foliage," as Jeanneret used to explore in his landscape representations. This narrative was finally explored in the south façade. Hence, the final version owes as much to the correlation between the architectural conception and the pattern of growth of a tree, as it does to the analogy between natural and built space and the way they are experienced. Riveted to the slope, it thrusts upwards like a fir and leans forwards in a gestural reflection.<sup>66</sup>

Something more remains to be said about the symbolic dimension involved in the experience proposed by Jeanneret.

<sup>66</sup> Although submitted to different aesthetic principles and to the functionalist discourse, the analogy with nature and its connections with bodily perception would linger in Le Corbusier: "Je vous montre ce rameau de tilleul ; à dessiner cette feuille d'arbre (et tant d'autres au temps où je m'occupais pieusement à étudier les merveilles de la nature), on prend conscience de ce qu'est une organisation claire, de ce qui, harmonieusement, sans heurt ni rupture, naît du dedans, s'étale, coule limpide et s'arrête en un bord, cette limite du contour qui est un caractère, ce contour qui crée un visage tout plein de sa concentration face aux événements extérieurs. Vous y observez un phénomène de circulation, expression de ses raisons vitales. Tout, et aussi en architecture, est une question de circulation. N'oublions pas que, toujours présent devant nous, un homme doit être debout sur ses jambes, avec ses yeux à 1m.70, qui regardent, qui voient, qui perçoivent, qui transmettent au mécanisme intellectuel et émotif des images qui sont entrées par cette machine admirable de l'œil. Voici l'unique outil de mesure des choses de l'architecture ; un homme est debout, regardant et subissant les courses aventureuses de votre crayon traçant des plans et des coupes. Ces plans et ces coupes qui n'ont de raison d'être que parce que des hommes en subiront l'effet." Le Corbusier, *Une Maison - un palais* (Paris: Crès, 1928), 78.

Another example reads: "Theory: every edifice is a biological being, whose life develops outward from within. The outside expresses an inside. It is the harmonious organization of whole events, as in a living body. And the site? Something else again! Just as an animal (or a man) adopts a different position or attitude depending on whether it is on flat ground or on sloping or very rough ground, just as it moves into sunlight or into shade, just as it seeks to see straight ahead or on either side, just so an edifice takes possession of the site according to its needs, adapts itself to the site, plants itself on the site. In this way it is never mutilated; it remains whole." Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City: Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism to Be Used as the Basis of Our Machine-Age Civilization*, Trans. Pamela Knight, Eleanor Levieux, and Derek Coltman (New York: Orion, 1964), 263. First published as *La Ville radieuse : éléments d'une doctrine d'urbanisme pour l'équipement de la civilisation machiniste* (Boulogne: Éditions de l'Architecture d'aujourd'hui, 1935).

It is worth remembering in this respect that Jeanneret's design reflects the nineteenth-century theoretical shift from an architecture anchored in historical and archetypal buildings to a Romantic conception of architecture as an expression of culturally specific values involving both nationalist feelings and the belief in a latent raising modernity.<sup>67</sup> This view of art and architecture was available to Jeanneret through the overall context of his Romantic education, through nineteenth-century French authors such as Blanc or Hippolyte Taine, and more directly through L'Eplattenier.<sup>68</sup> Jeanneret shared L'Eplattenier's commitment to create a modern regional artistic expression, reflecting the contemporary belief in a direct relationship between culture, national identity, and the *spirit of the age*.

The case I would like to make is that, both the tree and the exploration of the landscape embodied the same fundamental symbolic content, which seems to ultimately explain their implication in Jeanneret's design: the morals and virtue of the Swiss nation and race.

Within the search by L'Eplattenier's group for a regionalist style, the fir acquired a privileged iconic meaning. Pointing out that Ruskin is the most obvious source of inspiration for the specific meaning attached to the various motifs explored by the group, Sekler has shown the fundamental symbolism associated with the fir.<sup>69</sup> The vertical trunk, rooting in the hard sloping terrains of the Alps under the severest restraint, was seen as a symbol of the virtue and morals of the Swiss. Among the various species of trees, Ruskin attributes a particular symbolic value to the pine trees of the Alps, discussing them in a heroic tone; "of all trees they hitherto had most influence on human character ... the tremendous unity of the pine absorbs and moulds the life of a race. The pine shadows rest upon a nation."<sup>70</sup> This parallel, we might expect, is associated with the vital organic forces of the tree and of men's actions. Looking back to Ruskin's law of Radiation, the second law underlying trees provides the moral analogy of the "radiation, or tendency of force from one given point": "It typically expresses that healthy human actions should spring radiantly (like rays) from some single heart

<sup>67</sup> Unlike classicism, with its reference to universal values, the Romantic historical awareness and conviction that each historical period had created its own artistic expression rejected the codified architecture of the Beaux-Arts. Historical and geographic specificity, from topography to climate, were seen as factors that moulded each particular race, its character, and its ideals. Architecture became the expression of separate national psychological values, that is, the expression of the peoples' soul. Art should create a new style in tone with the *spirit of the age*, and the representative quality of architecture, particularly that of the dwelling, should be engaged in a metaphorical expression of nationalist spiritual and moral values. This debate was obviously related to that on the meaning of art and tradition within an industrializing society.

<sup>68</sup> Blanc, *Grammaire*; Hippolyte Taine, *Philosophie de l'art* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1879). A copy of Taine's book was available at the library of the art school. See no. 32 in the catalogue of the art school.

<sup>69</sup> Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 130-163; idem., "Ruskin," 42-95.

<sup>70</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5: 5, 9-10, 84-90.



motive.”<sup>71</sup> That this symbolic level was appropriate to architecture is equally suggested by Ruskin, for whom the analogy prevailed in the fir.<sup>72</sup> If the virtuous “Helvetii” had been shaped by the heroic fir, the fir, standing vertically in the sharp slopes of the Jura by virtue of its vertical inner impulse would naturally become the artistic expression of the Swiss nation and the moral habits and behavior of the race; for “there is no moral vice, no moral virtue, which has not its precise prototype in the art of painting; so that you may at your will illustrate the moral habit by the art, or the art by the moral habit.”<sup>73</sup>

The theme of the fir standing straight on the hard slopes emerges in both Jeanneret and L’Eplattenier’s study drawings, synthesized in the play of an oblique slope and the vertical trunks (fig. 65).<sup>74</sup> And Ruskin explains the symbolic meaning of the analogy of the tree explored in the Villa Fallet’s design, developing vertically on the Pouillerel slopes. But Jeanneret’s design of the Villa Fallet goes beyond Ruskin’s metaphor of the pine tree, to also encompass the narrative experience of climbing the mountains. In order to better understand the connections between these two dimensions—the tree and the experience of the mountain—it is perhaps useful to mention a quarrel between the members of the Swiss Alpine club and Ruskin.

The socially mixed members of the Swiss Alpine Club thought of themselves as a caste apart, as the soul of the nation, and could not conceive that someone like Ruskin could suppose to register the authentic mountain experience just by looking. Only firsthand experience of climbing conferred the right to describe the *mountain truth*, which was inaccessible to the dilettante and to the low-altitude walker. Ruskin counterclaimed that climbing was the least likely activity to yield the truth of the matter, and that the true revelation was found by looking, as Turner had. The artist could achieve the truth of nature through an expression of its underlying structure, which meant that painting would only be true by finding a way to convey the essence of matter rather than by transcribing nature literally.<sup>75</sup>

Jeanneret must have absorbed these conflicting views, for Ruskin’s lessons would have been layered upon the meaning that the mountains had within the Swiss cultural context in general; and he would probably have heard about this polemic through his

71 Idem., *The Elements of Drawing*, 195.

72 Distinguishing the pine tree from the other species Ruskin wrote: “The other great class of plants we may perhaps best call BUILDING PLANTS. These will *not* live on the ground, but eagerly raise edifices above it. Perishing, it leaves its work in the form which will be most useful to its successors—its own monument, and their inheritance. These architectural edifices we call Trees.” [emphasis by Ruskin] Idem., *Modern Painters*, 5: 8.

73 Idem., *The elements of drawing*, 121.

74 For L’Eplattenier see BV, CL-105-12, folder 4, where some studies of this theme are framed by a circle, suggesting a study for the decoration of a watchcase.

75 See Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 502-509.

father, a mountaineer and nature lover.<sup>76</sup> Both views shared the belief in a straight relationship between the character and morality of the virtuous Helvetic and the Swiss landscape, in which geography was deeply filtered through an idealized Alpine imagery. The Alpine mountains offered the essential basis for the Helvetic myth of virtue, which, largely nurtured by Rousseau, transfigured the herdsmen of the Alps into nature's primitive democrats. Swiss landscape became a symbol of virtue, liberty, democracy, and morality. This was obviously reflected in the Swiss aesthetic identity, founded upon an argument based on geography and another based on race.<sup>77</sup>

It may be argued that the attitudes of Ruskin and of the Alpine Club are both reflected in Jeanneret's graphic work: in the attempt to identify the essential form of natural elements through their inner structure, namely the fir and outcropping rocks; and in the recurrent theme of the Swiss experience of the climb and the demiurgic viewpoint from the summit—extensively explored by contemporary artists like Ferdinand Hodler and even L'Eplattenier, and partaking in a broader tradition of Romantic painting, associated to the eighteenth-century German aesthetic value of the mountain and its association with a metaphysical dimension and national identity.<sup>78</sup> This indicates the common symbolic content of form and experience in the Villa Fallet's design.

The fact that the low mountains covered with fir trees and pasture fields of the Jura differ from the Alpine landscape does not imply a different symbolic and experiential meaning. Walks uphill were a common activity at the end of the nineteenth century. The pasture mountain of Pouillerel provided a place for Sunday family walks. From the ridge one could see La Chaux-de-Fonds over the wooded hillside and the far distant Vosges on the opposite side. From his father, Jeanneret inherited the association between hill-walking and the imagery of the healthy Helvetic living in the mountains.<sup>79</sup> And this was not only a physical trace of the race, but also a moral one.

76 Jeanneret's father had a passion for mountaineering, having been president of the local Alpine Club for several years. Climbing was a main activity in Jeanneret's family summer vacations, often spent in the Valais region. His effort to share his fascination for alpinism with his sons was an educational matter. The mountain would teach them the virtues of brotherhood, discipline, selflessness, fortitude and sangfroid, which, for the alpinist, were the values of true men. On the family's summer vacations in the Valais and the passion of Jeanneret's father for mountaineering see Vogt, *Noble Savage*, 310-320.

77 Alain Clavien, *Les Helvétistes; Intellectuels et politique en Suisse romande au début du siècle* (Lausanne: Société d'Histoire de la Suisse romande; Editions d'en bas, 1993), 13-56. On the symbolic connections between the Swiss aesthetic identity and the Alpine landscape see also Gamboni, *La Géographie artistique*.

78 Literature on German Romantic painting is abundant. See, for instance, Élisabeth Décultot, "Peindre la montagne dans le romantisme allemand. Les divergences esthétiques de Friedrich, Koch et Carus" in *Le Sentiment de la montagne*, ed. Serge Lemoine (Grenoble: Musée de Grenoble, Éditions Glénat, 1998), 47-58.

79 The journal of Jeanneret's father describes one of those walks: "February 6, 1893—Went yesterday with my two dear ones to Pouillerel [the gently sloping mountain between La Chaux-de-Fonds and the river Doubs]. Wonderful walk and beautiful view, but very cold. These two children hike well, are robust, especially Albert. Edouard, whose constitution is more frail, is rather thin, but these youngsters have survived the winter without coughs thanks to the cod-liver oil that we make them take." Quoted in Brooks, *Formative Years*, 12.

In the long Sunday walks uphill with his sons and wife, Jeanneret's father expressed his passion for nature through precise explanations of local fauna and flora and natural phenomena, followed by moral discourses on justice and respect for others.<sup>80</sup> The most paradigmatic episode reflecting the extent to which Jeanneret imbibed the symbolic value of the mountains is most probably how he drew his own personal identity upon his ancestors, allegedly heretical Albigenses who had escaped from the religious persecutions in the south of France and found refuge in the Jura Mountains.<sup>81</sup>

It is within this context that we find in Le Corbusier's words the fundamental psychological implications of the experiential pattern of the Jura Mountains: "Le pied des Alpes, l'intérieur des Alpes m'écrasent. Plus haut, vers les sommets, aux derniers pâturages comme sur les cimes, l'espace renaît, mais les matériaux mis en œuvre manifestent la sauvagerie des éléments déchainés, la catastrophe des ruptures géologiques."<sup>82</sup> This passage provides evidence that, for Jeanneret, hiking throughout the mountains surrounding La Chaux-de-Fonds meant not only to escape from the city into nature, but also an experience within the realm of the Sublime. At the summit, the wide horizons vividly contrasted with the city's enclosed geographical setting. "Nous étions constamment sur les sommets; l'horizon immense nous nous était coutumier. Lorsque la mer de brouillard s'étendait à l'infini, c'était comme la vraie mer – que je n'avais jamais vue. C'était le spectacle culminant."<sup>83</sup>

In sum, the dialectic of the picturesque and the Sublime that Jeanneret repeatedly portrayed in his landscape representations of the Jura embodies a symbolic dimension; and through its metaphorical narrative, enacted daily in the experience it offers to the inhabitant, Jeanneret invested the Villa Fallet with that symbolic dimension.

By focusing on the four-year traveling period that followed, the next chapters will tackle the many meanings that he will layer upon this initial promenade, setting the course for Le Corbusier's modern architecture and for the architectural promenade, expressing culturally specific values of a latent raising modernity.

<sup>80</sup> Gauthier, *Le Corbusier*, 17; Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 24.

<sup>81</sup> Le Corbusier, *Croisade; ou le crépuscule des académies* (Paris : Éditions Crès, 1933), 33-35; Jean Petit, *Le Corbusier parle* (Paris: Éditions Forces Vives, 1967), 13 ; idem., *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 22-24; Gauthier, *Le Corbusier*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Le Corbusier, *Modulor 2 (La Parole est aux usagers)* (Boulogne, Seine : Éditions de l'Architecture d'aujourd'hui, 1955), 25.

<sup>83</sup> Le Corbusier, *L'Art décoratif*, 198. In this passage Le Corbusier was referring to L'Eplattenier's drawing lessons.



## 2 ITALY AND VIENNA, 1907-08

Following the tradition of nineteenth-century architectural education, Jeanneret departed on a sixty-five day trip to Northern Italy on September 3, 1907. The final destination was Vienna, where L'Eplattenier wanted him to study architecture in a school and work in the office of a Viennese architect. According to one of the itineraries suggested in the Baedeker guide, he travelled via Lucerne, the Saint Gotthard, and Lugano. From there he took a boat to Porto Ceresio, entering Italy by boat, and then he took the train to Milan. On the way to Florence he stopped in Pavia, Genoa, and Pisa, joining his schoolmate Léon Perrin in Florence on September 10, where he stayed until October 12. The two friends interrupted the Florentine stay to spend a week in Siena, visiting also Fiesole, Prato, Pistoia, and Lucca. The Italian tour would end in Venice.<sup>1</sup>

Jeanneret's interests and attitudes, it has been noted, underwent little change during the Italian sojourn. Ruskin, Jones, Blanc, or Taine, remained his main references and readings.<sup>2</sup> His attention was primarily driven to medieval art and architecture, Renaissance being only occasionally considered. His preferences went to painters such as Giotto, Gozzoli, Orcagna, or Fra Angelico, and buildings such as the Palazzo Vecchio or Santa Croce. His approach to architecture was dominated by the interest in painting and the decorative arts, as shown by his drawings of ornamental details (windows, cornices, etc.) and surface decoration. The case of Pisa, where he spent four days drawing ornamental details, is paradigmatic. In spite of his inability to understand unadorned architecture, Jeanneret was committed to architecture, and some of the visits and experiences that took place during this period exerted a decisive influence on him. In architectural terms, Tuscany offered the most prolific visits, which Passanti has discussed in his essay "Toscane." In a first section, I will adopt this essay as the point of departure for the Italian tour in order to understand how those visits were framed by a

<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive source on the Italian trip and the Vienna sojourn is to be found in Jeanneret's correspondence with his parents, recently published as *Le Corbusier, correspondance : Lettres à la famille 1900-1925*, vol. 1, ed. Rémi Baudouï and Arnaud Dercelles (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2011), hereafter cited as *Correspondance*, and with L'Eplattenier, published as *Le Corbusier, Lettres à ses maîtres*, vol. 2, *Lettres à Charles L'Eplattenier*, ed. Marie-Jeanne Dumont (Paris: Éditions du Linteau, 2006), hereafter cited as *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*. The extant drawings and watercolors concern mainly the Florentine stay and can be found at the archive of the Fondation Le Corbusier. Jeanneret lost his sketchbook after his departure from Florence, so we lack some information on his interests. The main literature on this period is: Giuliano Gresleri, ed., *Le Corbusier: Il viaggio in Toscana (1907)* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1987); Brooks, *Formative Years*, 95-116; Passanti, "Toscane." On the itinerary see Gresleri, *Viaggio in Toscana*, 2-6; Passanti, "Architecture," 81, 289n41.

<sup>2</sup> The correspondence with his parents shows how much he still admired Ruskin. In contrast, it reveals a gradual disagreement with Taine: "Me suis acheté une photographie de Ruskin, et l'ai place en face de mon pupitre. Quelle tête, quelle noblesse, quelle probité! Qu'on ne me parle pas de Taine en regard de cet homme-là." Jeanneret to parents, 17 November 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:82. [emphasis by Jeanneret]



notion of spatiotemporal experience akin to that of his first architectural work.

By contrast, the contribution of the Viennese stay, treated in the second section of this chapter, is mainly theoretical. On November 7 the two friends left Venice by boat to Fiume (Rijeka) crossing the Adriatic during the night. A thirteen-hour trip by train through Croatia and Hungary took them to Budapest, where they spent three nights. From Budapest they continued to Vienna, arriving on November 11, where they would stay four months. Jeanneret disliked Vienna and rejected the Viennese Secession art movement, from Josef Hoffmann to Joseph Olbrich and Otto Wagner. During the sojourn, he did not attend any Viennese art or architecture school, nor did he truly seek employment with an architect, rather joining Perrin in his drawing lessons with the sculptor Karl Stemolak. He spent the four months working on the villas Stotzer and Jaquemet to be built in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the authorship of which was shared with Chapallaz. Mainly concerned with decoration–style, broadly speaking—he explored a marked Gothic-like quality, being forced to simplify the ornamental work at the clients’ request. During the day Jeanneret worked on the design of the houses, the evening being devoted to read Blanc, Ruskin, and Édouard Schuré. Sundays were usually spent at Museums and at philharmonic concerts. His great Viennese discovery was opera.

It is in the reading of Schuré, within this cultural context, that we find the main theoretical contribution of the Viennese sojourn: the philosophical strengthening of Jeanneret’s idealism. This deepened Jeanneret’s interest for the symbolic and cultural meaning of architecture, ultimately leading him to travel to Paris.

## **TUSCANY: ARCHITECTURAL DEBUT AND ROMANTIC FRAMING**

Passanti calls attention to a paradox underlying Jeanneret’s trip to Italy. Although capable of deep architectural emotions, his artistic education had not provided him with the instruments to properly describe and interpret those emotions in architectural terms. However, it was precisely the elemental reaction to architecture during the journey that provided him with inspiration for future works, the most significant episodes being the Piazza dei Miracoli in Pisa (leading to the Palais des Soviets) and the monastery of Ema (leading to the Immeuble Villas and the Unité d’habitation). He further noted that the most intense experiences offered by Tuscany–Pisa, Ema, and the Florentine dome—were bound together by Jeanneret’s artistic education and by the importance of landscape in his architectural emotions, broadly rooted in his early



FIG. 71 Jeanneret. Florence. Baptistery, 1907.

FIG. 72 Jeanneret. Lucca. Detail of the cathedral of San Martino, 1907.

years in La Chaux-de-Fonds and heightened by the myth of the south.<sup>3</sup> It is precisely this point that interests us here.

It is widely accepted that one of the long-term influences of Tuscany on Le Corbusier was Pisa, which he first visited in 1907 in route to Florence. Jeanneret's conscious focus was on the ornamental details. Despite the lack of any comment on the arrangement of the Piazza dei Miracoli, Passanti has pointed out that the depiction of the Basilica's facade seen from the lawn, lying out-stretched under the blue sky and in complete silence, describes an elemental architectural situation: although he was not capable to strictly formulate it in architectural terms, this situation entailed latent intuitions that would lead to what Le Corbusier later defined as "le dehors est toujours un dedans."<sup>4</sup> It was these intuitions, says Passanti, that impressed him enough to want to return after visiting the Parthenon. This complementary relationship between architecture and nature, spontaneously sensed by Jeanneret, would be vital for the remaining two major episodes.

Before discussing them, however, I will analyze his approach to the inner space of Santa Croce. This will help us to understand the Florentine sojourn as the beginning of a transitional stage between his early education and the awakening of basic architectural concerns.

**SANTA CROCE** While Jeanneret's concern with ornament resurfaces in the majority of the Italian drawings, a considerable part of them also reveals his enthusiasm for light, depth of space and mystery, much like his early landscape representations. This is the

<sup>3</sup> Passanti, "Toscane."

<sup>4</sup> "... sur la place du Dôme, dans l'herbe, avec la calme et le beau ciel bleu comme compagnons ... cette façade du Dôme est simplement merveilleuse ... je ne retrouverai jamais ce calme de 6 heures, quand couché dans l'herbe, alors que tout le monde est loin, le feu d'artifice bat son plein." Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 19 September 1907, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 77.



FIG. 73 Jeanneret. Florence. Santa Maria Novella. Spanish Chapel, 1907.

FIG. 74 Jeanneret. Siena. Cathedral, 1907.

case of a watercolor of the baptistery of Santa Maria del Fiore (fig. 71). Its annotations confirm Jeanneret's attention to the contrast between the structural elements and the infill, the black granite of the columns and golden capitals contrasting with the marble of the wall. This interest in the distinct expression of independent architectural elements is related with the Arts and Crafts association between ornament and construction, with obvious consequences in the formal definition of the *object*. Thus, the reasoning underlying the figurative representation is transposed from nature (the organic ornamental motifs that he used to explore) to classical architectural elements. In this case, this seems to be associated with Jeanneret's attention to the illusion of depth conveyed by the color contrast.

More explicit are cases such as the watercolor of the cathedral of San Martino, in Lucca (fig. 72), similar to some drawings by Ruskin, in which the chiaroscuro emphasizes the depth of the succeeding planes and window, endowing it with a certain sense of mystery. Another case is the Spanish Chapel in Santa Maria Novella. An analytical drawing reveals his attention to the structural solution (FLC4932), whereas a watercolor portraying a grilled window seems to focus both on ornament and on the mysterious effect of the veiled interior (fig. 73).<sup>5</sup> The representation of the interior of the cathedral of Siena is particularly instructive (fig. 74). The sense of mystery and spatial depth are intentionally pursued through the angular perspective, the emphasis on the chiaroscuro, the effects of hidden sources of light and spatial scale. Here, the analogy of the forest is strongly intensified by the profusion of, and proximity to, the columns obliquely framed.

5 The Spanish chapel is discussed at length in Ruskin, "The Vaulted Book," chap. 4 in *Mornings in Florence* (New York: Hurst and Company, 1893), esp. 121-123. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.



FIG. 75 Jeanneret. Florence. Santa Croce, 1907.

The most significant example of how Jeanneret's Romantic education framed his debut into a more abstract architectural approach is a sketch of Santa Croce, which Jeanneret visited on several occasions, mentioning the church in an early letter on September 13.<sup>6</sup> A sheet with several sketches of the interior is, as pointed out by Brooks, one of the rare occasions in which Jeanneret diverged from Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence* and one of the few manifestations of Jeanneret's interest in construction (fig. 75).<sup>7</sup> Ruskin left no doubt on his opinion about Santa Croce. He disliked the church mainly because of the lack of vaulting and the T plan scheme, which prevented the space from expanding vertically and along the longitudinal axis:

"You will return home with a general impression that Santa Croce church is, somehow, the ugliest Gothic church you ever were in. Well, that is really so ... There are two features, on which, more than on any others, the grace and delight of a fine Gothic building depends; one is the springing of its vaulting, the other the proportion and fantasy of its traceries. This church of Santa Croce has no vaultings at all, but the roof of a farm-house barn. And its windows are all of the same pattern, - the exceedingly prosaic one of two pointed arches, with a round hole above, between them... And lastly, while in the fine Gothic buildings, the entire perspective concludes itself gloriously in the high and distant apses, here the nave is cut across sharply by a line of ten chapels, the apse being only a tall recess in the midst of them, so that, strictly speaking, the church is not of the form of a cross, but of a letter 'T'."<sup>8</sup>

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Jeanneret's early education seems to explain his disagreement with Ruskin. His concern with construction is particularly clear in the bottom right drawing of the tim-

<sup>6</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 13 September 1907, repr. *Correspondance*, 1:34-35.

<sup>7</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 101.

<sup>8</sup> Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, 19-21.



ber roof trusses. He notes the 20 meter span and the rhythm of trusses, commenting on the association between them and the large plane of the side wall of the nave supported by just a few columns: “principe de gdes surfaces très très gdes, soutenues par d’énormes arcs, avec piliers très peut nombreux. Il n’y a que 7 piliers de chaque côté de la nef (sic).” One could see affinities between the rhythm of the timber trusses and the ceiling of Matthey-Doret’s music room. Such association may explain Jeanneret’s attention to construction: he was recording a constructive system which, in architectural terms, essentially differs from the scheme of the music room in terms of scale.

More importantly, the main perspectives of the sheet suggest that his interest in construction also related to the architectural space.<sup>9</sup> Here too, a parallel may be established between, on the one hand, the longitudinal space, the huge white planes of the side walls, and the rhythm of the timber structure, columns and arches and, on the other hand, the motifs worked into the plaster of the music room side walls and their contribution to establish the rhythm along the longitudinal axis. This association entails a transition from figurative ornament to the very realm of architecture, from surface decoration to architectural elements such as planes, supports (columns), and light sources. The annotations about white plain surfaces and simple, unadorned solutions suggest this shift.

The background for this shift is the analogy of the forest, which had played a major role in Jeanneret’s early works, including the music room. And when he stopped in Milan on the way to Florence, he praised the cathedral describing the interior as a space of refuge of huge scale evoking the mystery of the forest: “... arrive à 2 heures sur place du Dôme ; il y avait un tel tintamarre que je me suis sauvé à l’intérieur. Là *quelle grandeur* ! (mystère de la forêt) ... l’œil se met à mesurer, et l’on reste ébaubi.”<sup>10</sup> The most interesting thing is how this *mystery of the forest* seems to have subverted Jeanneret’s spatial interpretation of Santa Croce. On the top right of the sheet there are two axial perspectives of the nave. In the main perspectives, however, Jeanneret adopted a viewpoint out of axis, focusing on the lit wall of the transept filtered by the rhythm of arches and columns rather than on the altar and the stained glass of the apse. His sketch reads: “le secret de la grandeur énorme qui prend S<sup>a</sup> Croce est ds la ligne a b c d e f g h. énorme ogive lumineuse formée par la paroi unie du transept très éclairé et vue au travers de l’enchevêtrement des voûtes et des piliers” [emphasis by Jeanneret].<sup>11</sup> By displacing the vanishing point, Jeanneret read a diagonal axis within the regular longi-

<sup>9</sup> This seems to be corroborated by von Moos when, comparing one of these drawings with one by Perrin, argues that Perrin explores the same light effect disregarding the spatial analysis. Von Moos, “Voyages en Zigzag,” in *LC Before LC*, 29-30.

<sup>10</sup> Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 19 September 1907, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 75-76.

<sup>11</sup> The mention of the line “a b c d e f g h” suggests that he may have drawn a plan in the lost sketchbook.



tudinal scheme, subverting the axial development of space underlying the typology of the Christian church and forsaking the symbolism involved in its narrative. Space was evaluated through the light on the white transept wall artificially placed at the vanishing point, which he overemphasized in the chiaroscuro. That is to say, his interest went to the space generated by white, unadorned planes displaying intricate depth relationships and enriched by the supports and their rhythm. This is particularly clear when compared to the depthless axial views. In the painted perspective, the play of architectural elements screens a space bathed by a mysterious light coming from a hidden source, as if it were a clearing in the forest seen through the trees. This is in keeping with Ruskin's advocacy of mystery achieved through "a certain sort of indistinctness," and the notion of prospect associated with it.

Put shortly, Jeanneret interpreted space through the concepts of spatial depth and mystery involved in the analogy of the forest. It is this that led him to look at the church in architectural terms, focusing on the character of space resulting from construction, architectural elements and light, independent from ornament. Resonating with the kind of narrative explored in his early works, his interpretation disregarded the religious experience of space and the metaphorical realm associated with it. But he was starting to look at architecture in more abstract terms.

**THE MONASTERY OF EMA** Early on September 15, Jeanneret visited the Carthusian Monastery of Ema, at Il Galluzzo, on the outskirts of Florence, where he would also purposely return at the end of his *voyage d'Orient*. Echoes of the narrative throughout the Jura Mountains may be found here too.

Broadly speaking, the monastery develops around two main areas: a courtyard giving access to the church and communal facilities, defining one side of a second area at the rear, a larger secluded cloister with the monks' cells on the remaining three sides. The most significant typological feature lies in the cells. They are two storey independent dwelling units, each with a private walled garden, linked by the continuous gallery of the cloister (fig. 76). Jeanneret drew a plan and a cross-section of one of the cells in a single sheet with three main annotations (fig. 77). One concerns the garden; the second shows his attention to the view over the mountains—"vue splendide sur les Apennins"; the third remarks on the suitability of the typology for social housing design: "Cellule d'un frère à la Chartreuse d'Ema / s'appliquerait admirablement à des maisons ouvrières, les corps de logis étant entièrement indépendants. Tranquillité épatante ; le gd mur pourrait cacher la vue de la rue."

Passanti has remarked that Jeanneret was particularly impressed by the monastery in two ways. The first one concerns the duality individual/collective involving the association between the individual cells and the cloister, that is, between the private



FIG. 76 Il Galluzzo. Monastery of Ema. General view from the cropland.

dwelling and the communal facilities. Although in 1907 he mainly commented on the intimacy and autonomy of the cells, one letter suggests that he was acquainted with the theories of Charles Fourier and his communal housing proposals involving this same duality: “Ah ! les chartreux ! Je voudrais toute ma vie habiter ce qu’ils appellent leurs cellules. C’est la solution de la maison ouvrière type unique ou plutôt du paradis terrestre ; j’écrirai à Sébastien Faure pour qu’il vienne se rendre compte.”<sup>12</sup> Faure was an anarchic partisan whose conference in La Chaux-de-Fonds—entitled *La faillite du christianisme*—Jeanneret seems to have attended. Passanti has suggested that Faure probably mentioned Fourier and his theories on communal housing.<sup>13</sup> Later on, Le Corbusier mentioned on several occasions the debt of his researches on modern dwelling to the monastery.<sup>14</sup>

12 Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 19 September 1907, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 82-83.

13 On Faure’s conference and the relation between La Chaux-de-Fonds and the anarchic movement see Dumont, *Le Corbusier : Lettres à Charles L’Eplattenier*, 83n1. For the discussion on the monastery of Ema see, Passanti, “Toscane”, 22-23. Peter Serenyi, who first discussed the influence of this visit, has pointed out that for Le Corbusier, Ema was the main architectural model of monasticism. In his attempt to create a new collective world order, Le Corbusier fused two traditions of communal living, both entailing the reconciliation between individual and community will: Fourierism and monasticism. Serenyi has further noted that Le Corbusier’s 1922 concept of the *Unité d’habitation*, which results from the association of Citrohan cells, stems from Fourier’s tradition and echoes his assessment that “the first duty of architecture in a period of renewal” is that of “bringing about a revision of values through a revision of the constituent elements of the house.” Peter Serenyi, “Le Corbusier, Fourier, and the Monastery of Ema,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 49, no. 4 (Dec., 1967): 280, 283.

14 Discussing the modern dwelling in *Précisions*, for instance, he wrote: “L’origine de ces recherches, pour mon compte, remonte à la ‘Chartreuse d’Ema’ aux environs de Florence, en 1907.” Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, 91-92, 97-101. To the Dominican Père Couturier he told that the monastery had set the course of his entire career. Père Couturier, quoted in von Moos, *Elements of a Synthesis*, 140. The most comprehensive reference reads: “1907. J’ai 19 ans. Je prends pour la première fois contact avec l’Italie. En pleine Toscane, la Chartreuse d’Ema couronnant une colline laisse voir les créneaux formés par chacune des cellules de moines à pic sur un immense mur de château-fort. Entre chaque créneau est un jardin profond, complètement dérobé à toute vue extérieure et privé également de toute vue au dehors. Le créneau ouvre sur les horizons toscans l’infini du paysage, le tête-à-tête avec soi-même. Derrière est la cellule elle-même, reliée par un cloître aux autres cellules, au réfectoire et à l’église plantée au centre. Une sensation extraordinaire m’envahit. Je mesure qu’une aspiration humaine authentique est comblée : le silence, la solitude ; mais aussi, le commerce (le contact quotidien) avec les mortels ; et encore l’accession aux effusions vers l’insaisissable.”

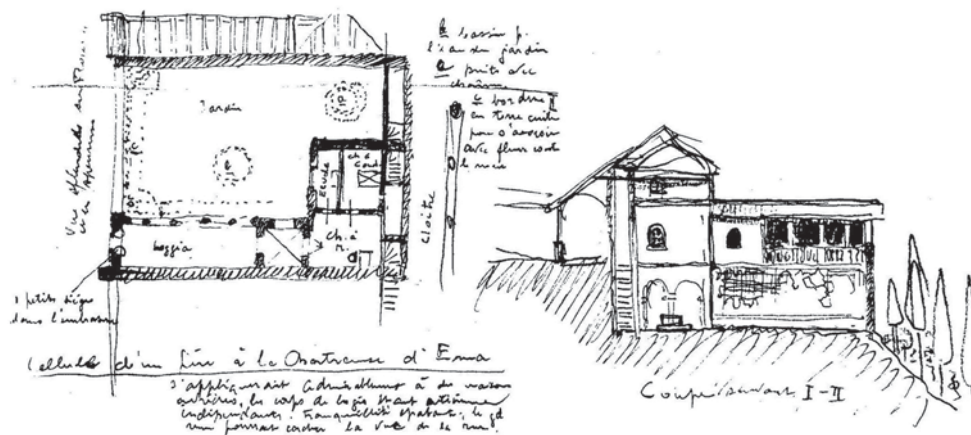


FIG. 77 Jeanneret. Monastery of Ema. Plan and section of a cell, 1907.

The second theme pointed out by Passanti is the tension between the view over the landscape from the upper level of the dwelling and the contrasting enclosure of the garden at the lower level. Jeanneret's interpretation would be clarified by his second visit (fig. 90). But the 1907 drawing already bears witness of his attention both to the view and the secluded garden. Passanti's fundamental argument is that, through this experience, Jeanneret came to see architecture as a filter which mediates between Man and landscape. A significant trigger for Jeanneret's insight was given by Giovanni Bellini's *Sacra Allegoria*, which he had seen a few days earlier in the Uffizi gallery (fig. 78).

As pointed out by Passanti, Leo Schubert has argued that Bellini's painting had a formal influence in Jeanneret's design for the terrace of his parents' house four years later—the so called *Maison Blanche*.<sup>15</sup> To this, I would add that Jeanneret's interest in it was not just architectural. In 1902, Gustav Ludwig advanced the first interpretation of Bellini's work, reading it as a pictorial representation of an episode from Guillaume de Deguileville's fourteenth-century poem *Le Pèlerinage de l'Âme*; in short, the path of purification of the soul in Purgatory.<sup>16</sup> Jeanneret could easily have interpreted the

...

On the 1911 visit he wrote: "Me Voici de nouveau à la Chartreuse d'Éma. Cette fois, j'ai dessiné ; aussi, les choses me sont mieux entrées dans la tête... Et je suis parti dans la vie pour la plus grande bagarre. J'avais 23 ans. Dans cette première impression d'harmonie, Chartreuse d'Éma, le fait essentiel, profond ne devait m'apparaître que plus tard – la présence, l'instance de l'équation à résoudre confiée à la perspicacité des hommes : le binôme : 'individu-collectivité'. Mais la solution porte également une leçon tout aussi décisive celle-ci : pour résoudre une grande part des problèmes humains, il faut disposer de lieux et de locaux. Et c'est de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme. La Chartreuse d'Éma était un lieu ; et les locaux étaient présents, aménagés selon la plus belle biologie architecturale. La Chartreuse d'Éma est un organisme. Le terme 'organisme' avait pris naissance dans ma conscience." Le Corbusier, quoted in Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 28, 44. In addition see Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1:40.

<sup>15</sup> Leo Schubert, *La Villa Jeanneret-Perret di Le Corbusier, 1912, la prima opera autonoma* (Venice: Marsilio, 2006), 78-81.

<sup>16</sup> Ludwig's interpretation remained unchallenged until 1946. Although there is no consensus on the overall meaning of the painting to this day, most of the interpretations seem to agree on an allegory of redemption of mankind. For a discussion of the most significant contributions on the painting see Anchise Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini: catalogo completo dei dipinti* (Firenze: Cantini, 1992), 218-223. For an interpretation of the painting based on the meaning of the central tree see Susan J. Delaney, "The Iconography of Giovanni Bellini's Sacred Allegory," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 59, no. 3



FIG. 78 Giovanni Bellini. Sacra allegoria, 1485-88.

painting in similar terms, whether or not he was acquainted with Ludwig's interpretation. The terrace is clearly a transitional space, a physical articulating element: it is surrounded by a balustrade interrupted on axis, behind the central tree, providing a narrow veiled access to an idealized landscape of lakes and mountains. Its undisguised religious realm easily leads the beholder to the allegory of a spiritual transitional stage of life (and, as a transitional stage, it involves a narrative). This suggests that Jeanneret could have been concerned with the spiritual dimension of the mediating role of architecture, not just its spatial one.

Such a spiritual dimension could be interpreted in the light of a broader intellectual and cultural context, from the Swiss association between the Alpine landscape and morality to the contemporary assumption that the house is a vital tool in shaping the moral behavior of men—an assumption that relates to the social causes of political and social movements such as that of Faure's *La faillite du christianisme*. Jeanneret's attention to both the garden of the monk's cells and the view from the upper level befits this spiritual dimension of architecture. The enclosed garden defines an ideal space of seclusion and meditation. Above, the view over the landscape *elevates the mind by the contemplation of greatness*, to recall Ruskin's definition of the Sublime. Like in the Jura, the cells promoted a spiritual process of purification through the symbolic experience of an ascending narrative leading to the contemplation of the mountains from a high vantage point, in this case the Apennines.

To further sustain this interpretation we must recall that the monastery of Ema was not the only one visited during the trip. On the way to Florence, Jeanneret had vis-





FIG. 79 Certosa di Pavia. Aerial view.  
 FIG. 80 Certosa di Pavia. Plan and site plan.

ited the Monastery of Pavia, which belongs to the same Carthusian typology—a courtyard and a cloister with independent cells with private garden. In a letter to his parents he mentioned it while extolling the monastery of Ema:

“... mon admiration a été la même à la Chartreuse de Pavie et j’ai pu me convaincre que s’ils renonçaient au monde, ils savaient du moins s’arranger une vie délicieuse et je suis persuadé que tout compte établi, eux sont les heureux, et surtout encore ceux qui ont le Paradis en vue !”<sup>17</sup>

While it is not totally clear who are those “qui ont le paradis en vue,” it must be asked why, at the end of the journey to the East, Jeanneret returned to Ema and not Pavia; and why it was Ema that deserved to be repeatedly mentioned by Le Corbusier as a decisive influence on his housing design. The answer is given by Jeanneret himself: “J’y ai trouvé la solution de la maison ouvrière type unique. Seulement, le paysage sera difficile à retrouver ...”<sup>18</sup> This means that Jeanneret regarded the new mass housing typology as something dependent on landscape, but he did not find all landscapes to be suitable. In contrast with Pavia, Il Galluzzo offered the ideal landscape—the *view over the paradise*—which turned it into “a place.”<sup>19</sup>

In sum, Jeanneret seems to have read the cells of the monastery of Ema as an architectural device disclosing the view over a meaningful landscape by means of an ascending narrative. This interpretation applies not just to the cells but to the whole monastery. The comparison with Pavia is instructive also in this respect.

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17 Jeanneret to parents, 14-16 September 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:37

18 Ibid.

19 “il faut disposer de lieux et de locaux ... La Chartreuse d’Ema était un lieu.” Le Corbusier, quoted in Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 44.



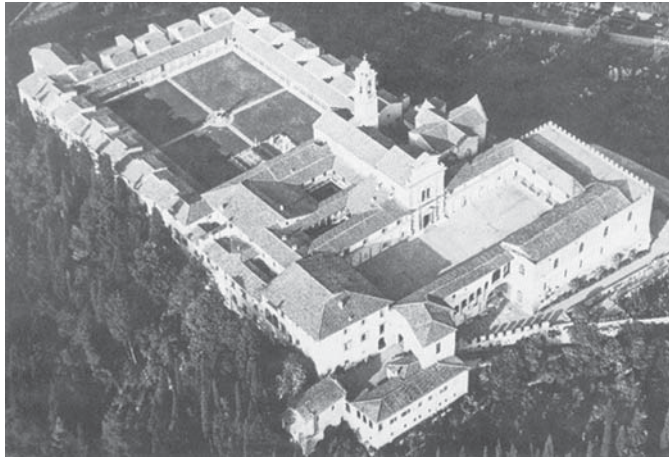


FIG. 81 Monastery of Ema. Aerial view. Accesses on the right.

FIG. 82 Monastery of Ema. Main access.

Beyond the over-decorated facades of the church and body of communal services facing the entry courtyard at Pavia, the main difference between both monasteries lies precisely in the landscape. The monastery of Pavia is in the middle of a vast plain (fig. 79-80). A straight road gives access to the first cloister, defining its major axis extending towards the church. As one enters, the second cloister is on the right, separated from the former by the communal services. In contrast, the monastery of Ema stands atop a hill, surrounded by undulating fields bounded at a distance by the silhouette of the Apennines (fig. 81). The access develops along a meandering ascent, enriched by an elaborate sequence of spaces. A straight ascending path leads from the main road to the entrance gate, opening to a first small courtyard (fig. 82-90). From there, after a 180 degree turn, one reaches a small vestibule, joining the access from the cropland—the main access today. A gentle ascending ramp with low steps leads to an upper level, while keeping a visual relationship with both the main and the cropland accesses. At the top, a door on the left opens onto a second courtyard with the church directly in front defining its minor axis. The church integrates the body of the communal services, beyond which is the cloister with the monks' cells. The winding ascending path, interspersed with an elaborated sequence of spaces, is now extended to the view from each cell. The *loggia* articulates the dwelling and the view over the private garden and the Apennines enclosing the nearer undulating fields.

The landscape around Ema thus implies two main aspects which seem to underlie Jeanneret's preference. The first one concerns the landscape itself, or what we could call the raw material of this mediation: undulating fields bounded by the far mountains rather than an endless plain. Here Jeanneret could find the two poles of the aesthetic theory of the beautiful (picturesque) and the sublime, with which he was ac-



**FIG. 83** Monastery of Ema. Main access on the left, leading to the entry courtyard and ramp on the right, leading to the second courtyard. In the foreground is the access from the cropland, today the main entrance.

**FIG. 84** Monastery of Ema. Entry courtyard with the entrance door and the access to the ramp.

**FIG. 85** Monastery of Ema. Ramp and access from the cropland.

**FIG. 86** Monastery of Ema. Second courtyard and church.

**FIG. 87** Monastery of Ema. Main cloister with the monk's cells.

**FIG. 88** Monastery of Ema. Main cloister with the monk's cells.

quainted through Ruskin and Blanc.<sup>20</sup> The Apennines provided the sublime, the grandeur of nature and its indifference to men, human order, or worldly things—in short, a hint of the divine. At the other pole were the undulating fields which he called the

<sup>20</sup> The first chapter of Blanc's *Grammaire*, titled "Du Sublime et du beau," deals precisely with this dialectic: "Le sublime peut donc se trouver partout, même dans le chaos, même dans l'horrible ; le beau ne saurait être conçu en dehors de certaines lois d'ordre, de proportion et d'harmonie ... Le beau est toujours humain et toujours à notre portée ; mais le sublime participe du divin et nous ouvre comme une échappée de vue sur l'infini ... c'est depuis que l'homme occupe la terre avec les animaux, ses satellites, que le beau y est apparu, et c'est à l'humanité que le beau appartient ... Le reste du monde nous offre le spectacle d'un désordre sublime." (ibid., 6-8)



FIG. 89 Monastery of Ema. Entry door of a cell.  
 FIG. 90 Jeanneret. Monastery of Ema. Loggia and garden of a cell, 1911.

“musical landscape of Tuscany”: the smooth, gentle curves of the South, the tameable landscape delicately ordered by the work of men; Goethe’s “*das Land wo die Zitronen blühen*,” as Passanti has put it.<sup>21</sup> Unlike Pavia, Ema afforded the Ruskinian experiences of the sublime which the Jura landscape had provided him with: the elevation of the mind by the contemplation of the grandeur of nature.

The second aspect of the landscape around Ema relates to the architectural solution and the resulting comprehensive mediation that architecture operates between Man and landscape. The approach to the monastery of Pavia is made along a straight road in the plain, broadly offering the same view that one has from the cells. In Ema, we have seen, the landscape generated a rich picturesque spatial sequence along the access before reaching the cells, and this permanently redefined the relation of the promeneur with the entire view. So, in experiencing the architecture of Ema as a mediator between man and the landscape, Jeanneret would hardly restrict this mediation to the cell, rather looking at the comprehensive mediation offered by the entire building along the access. The Jura landscape had taught him that the association between the experience of the sublime and personal isolation was attained through a comprehensive spatiotemporal experience. He would therefore spontaneously have recognized both the high vantage point providing the necessary seclusion for a mental experience of the sublime and the meandering ascent preceding it. This suggests that Jeanneret approached the monastery through the same lens involved in the phenomenological experience proposed in the Villa Fallet and through the idea of a mental projection towards the view associated with it, metaphorically represented in Bellini’s spiritual

<sup>21</sup> Passanti evokes Goethe’s expression “The land where the lemon-trees flourish,” from the poem *Orange*, noting that Jeanneret bought a postcard of the famous lemon-tree hills. Passanti, “Toscane,” 19.

journey.

In a later explanation of his thinking on house design, Le Corbusier would express his debt to the monastery, conveying a similarly multivalent understanding of the landscape. On the one hand, architecture completes the landscape by punctuating it with the rhythm of the cubic cells; on the other hand, the housing conception depends on the view over the landscape:

“L’origine de ces recherches, pour mon compte, remonte à la visite de la ‘Chartreuse d’Ema’ aux environs de Florence, en 1907. J’ai vu, dans ce paysage musical de la Toscane, une *cit  moderne* couronnant la colline. La plus noble silhouette dans le paysage, la couronne ininterrompue des cellules des moines ; chaque cellule a vue sur la plaine, et d gage sur un jardinet en contre-bas enti rement clos. J’ai pens  ne pouvoir jamais rencontrer une telle interpr tation joyeuse de l’habitation.”<sup>22</sup>

Underlying this double value is a temporal ordering of events in a comprehensive experience of architecture and landscape, expressed through its two major moments, the approach to the monastery and the final view from the cells. Jeanneret’s preference for Ema over Pavia suggests that this passage also expresses Jeanneret’s early approach to the monastery in terms of a spatial narrative. More than that, it synthesizes a comprehensive concept of the city, involving a phenomenological and a mental level through its two main moments, such as proposed in my initial interpretation of the *Ville Contemporaine*: the approach to the geometric city rising in the landscape and the view from a high vantage point.

**THE DOME OF SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE** Further evidence that Jeanneret would have looked at the monastery of Ema as a comprehensive experience involving the meandering access and the view over the sublime landscape is provided by what Passanti has termed “the revelation of the dome.” This was the last of Jeanneret’s major experiences in Tuscany, and it entailed a change of attitude towards the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore. During four weeks Jeanneret repeatedly rejected Brunelleschi’s dome. By the end of the Florentine sojourn, while his initial enthusiasm for the Palazzo Vecchio faded, he suddenly discovered Brunelleschi’s dome at a distance from San Miniato al Monte and from the train, dominating the silhouette of the city:

“...quittant Florence, nous avons fait un crochet sur Lucques ... Si la visite l  ne rapporta pas  norm ment, elle me permit du moins de voir 4 fois la coupole de Brunelleschi, au

<sup>22</sup> Le Corbusier, *Pr cisions*, 91. Jeanneret’s attention to the rhythm of the cells also dates back to the 1907 visit, since it reappears in the 1910 project for *Les Ateliers d’art*, to be discussed in the chapter under the heading “Germany, 1910-1911.” Associations may also be established with Le Corbusier’s sketches for the “Groupe de maisons en s rie sur ossature ‘Dom-ino,’” in Le Corbusier, *Œuvre compl te*, 1:29.



lieu d'une, et ce régal-là valait la peine du dérangement. La veille du départ j'étais monté à la coupole et m'étais rendu compte de sa stupéfiante énormité ; cela avait confirmé au centuple l'idée de splendeur que j'avais eue quelques jours avant depuis San Miniato. – Mais *voir* la coupole depuis la place du Dôme ... et *voir* la coupole depuis les environs de Florence, la voir comme la voyaient les étrangers du moyen-âge, quand ils arrivaient au sommet d'une colline et que tout à coup surgissait dans la brume bleue du matin ce monstre de pierre, colline plus grande que celles d'alentours parce qu'ordonnée, sont 2 choses singulièrement différentes ... Je l'ai vue ainsi depuis le train, très longuement, à 4 reprises et les 4 fois dans la brume matinale et bigre il eût fallut être sérieusement bouché pour ne pas comprendre !"<sup>23</sup>

Not that he had failed to notice the grandeur of the dome before; on the contrary, its scale is particularly emphasized when, walking along the streets of Florence, it dramatically emerges above the roofs and facades in the foreground. But it was not bigness per se that awoke his interest; it was the grandeur of the territorial scale.

Passanti has shown that Jeanneret thought of the dome in terms of Blanc's writings on the aesthetic category of the Sublime. Blanc conceptualized the Sublime by referring to the immeasurable and mysterious aspects of nature, evoking infinity and the divine. According to Blanc, architecture attains the Sublime by reproducing the most imposing characters of nature, that is, by combining grandeur and the absolute character of geometry. The archetype is Egyptian architecture, which instead of serving to protect men from nature, tried to rival with its most imposing elements. Blanc thus provided the key for Jeanneret's interpretation of Brunelleschi's dome—a manifestation of the Sublime—when he saw its grandeur and geometry at a distance, rivaling with the surrounding hills (fig. 91). The consequences pointed out by Passanti were crucial: this revelation constituted the beginning of the transition from a Ruskinian conception of architecture conceived as a humble and respectful homage to nature—created by God—towards an architecture conceived as an expression of an idea and a will, giving birth to Le Corbusier's lifelong obsessive pursuit of the Sublime in architecture and urban planning.<sup>24</sup>

The case which I would like to make is that such a fundamental discovery is associated to the idea of a temporal ordering of events within a territorial scale. Jeanneret describes the dome as seen from the train, “très longuement ... dans la brume matinale,” and to translate the experience he uses the image of the Middle Age traveler (remarkable paradox) for whom the dome suddenly comes into view as he reaches the top of a hill after a journey across the landscape. The idea of the dome and the surrounding hills merging in the mist, it should be added, contains in itself the sense

23 Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 11 November 1907, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 92.

24 Passanti, “Toscane,” 25-26. In addition, see his “Aesthetic Dimension,” 25-37.





FIG. 91 Jeanneret. Florence. “Les coupoles de Toscane.” Dome of Santa Maria del Fiore.

of bodily dynamic experience and gradual discovery, conveyed by the depth relationships it introduces in the watercolor. This had been, we have seen, one of the lessons of Ruskin, associated with the mystery sparked by “a certain sort of indistinctness” and the “absolute infinity of things.” But through the image of the traveler, Jeanneret indisputably connects Blanc’s conceptualization of the Sublime (and the territorial scale associated to it) with a narrative across the landscape, the final moment consisting of the revelation of the Sublime *monster of stone* looming in the mist. Once more, this is no surprise, for it essentially reproduces the pattern of his experiences in the Jura Mountains: the encounter with the Sublime after a meandering ascent. But the mental experience is now that of a work of art comparable to the grandeur of the landscape.

From Jeanneret’s correspondence, we know that there was also another reason for his admiration of the dome. The “revelation of the dome” was perceptibly related to the experience of climbing the dome:

“Je trouve Florence magnifique, je la revois encore avec plus de plaisir après Sienne ... La coupole du Dôme, qui s’est enfin révélée après quatre semaines d’indifférence ... Suis allé ce matin sur la coupole, et suis redescendu stupéfait de tant de grandeur ; je rétracte toutes les bêtises que j’ai pensées et peut-être écrites sur le génie qui a osé construire une chose si colossale et si forte. Monté également les quatre-vingt-quatorze mètres du Palais-Vieux. Ascension beaucoup moins intéressante parce que moins instructive au point de vue constructif. Dit adieu à cette magnifique ville, à ce paysage si beau ; je les quitte avec un énorme regret ...”<sup>25</sup>

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The contribution of the experience of climbing the dome to the conception of architecture as an expression of an idea and a will seems inescapable. Jeanneret expresses

25 Jeanneret to parents, 8 October 1907. repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:55-58.

it through its constructive and physical dimension. But also here, the idea and the will are related to a narrative. The dome was no longer seen as an ornamented surface, for it provided an architectural lesson uniting an ingenious structural principle and an impressive spatial experience, that of literally climbing stairs between the double-shell structure, ending with a magnificent view over the city and the far mountains. Also at this experiential level, the mountain had transmuted into a work of art.

These episodes of the trip to Tuscany show how Jeanneret's architectural debut was framed by his Romantic education. He was starting to look at architecture in more abstract terms. But this renewed look took place through the analogy of the forest and remained associated with the paradigmatic narrative of the Jura landscape, implying a close association between architecture and landscape. This association was colored by the myth of the south and the imagery of a mythic landscape, which made the experiences like Pisa, Ema, or the Duomo more intense and conferred to them a paradigmatic resonance.<sup>26</sup> This myth, associated with the myth of a "primitive" or "original" state, would acquire a philosophical dimension with the reading of Schuré.

#### **FROM FLORENCE TO VIENNA: SCHURÉ AND THE ROMANTIC DISCOURSE.**

After Florence, Jeanneret visited Faenza, Ravenna, Bologna, Ferrara, Mantua, Garda, Verona, Padua and Venice, and then spent five months in Vienna. For our purposes, the most important experience was Jeanneret's reading of Schuré. The background of this reading was the notion of three great historical periods—ancient Egypt, Greece and the Middle Ages—and of a mythical South, behind all of which stood Rousseau's notion of origins. This background, underpinned by the contemporary evolutionary conceptions of history, had already been available to Jeanneret at an early stage through authors such as Jones or Henry Provensal, and more directly through L'Éplattenier. Schuré contextualized these notions in a broader Romantic discourse. Due to its importance for Jeanneret's subsequent education, I will momentarily set aside the main theme of this work in order to tackle the architectural and philosophi-

<sup>26</sup> Gresleri has noted that a North European exotic view of Italy had endowed the tradition of the artists and architects' formative travels with a mythic dimension. Also Passanti has stressed the connection between the myth of the south and the imagery of a mythic landscape. Gresleri, *Viaggio in Toscana*, 3; Passanti, "Toscane", 18-27; idem., "Architettura," 81, 289n41.

cal implications of Schuré in Jeanneret's thought. Before that, it is necessary to understand the extent to which these historical conceptions had already been part of his education at the art school. I will do this by proposing that they are reflected in the ornamental work of the Villa Fallet.

It has already been mentioned that, in 1907, Jeanneret's intellectual and cultural preferences went to medieval art and a mythic view of the South which, Passanti has noted, he shared with his father.<sup>27</sup> As a general idea, the mythic imagery of the South also entailed a growing knowledge of the eastern world, hence a discourse that rejected the preconception of the universal value of Greco-Roman art. Eighteenth-century historiography, focused on progress, classificatory thinking and positivism, had led to an evolutionary view of history as a chronological process of cultural development and progress. Art and architecture were consequently read in the light of this reasoning.

Such notion of three major historical periods, linked with the Rousseauian idea of *origins*, informed L'Eplattenier's search for a regionalist style.<sup>28</sup> If Italy represented part of the myth, Egypt was the epicenter of an original artistic expression. Among Jeanneret's readings, one reflecting this view was Jones's *Grammar*:

“whilst we can trace in direct succession the Greek, the Roman, the Byzantine, with its offshoots, the Arabian, the Moresque, and the Gothic, from this great parent, we must believe the architecture of Egypt to be a pure original style, which arose with civilization on Central Africa ... the Egyptians are inferior only to themselves ... In the Egyptian we have no traces of infancy or of any foreign influence; and we must therefore, believe that they went for inspiration direct from nature.”<sup>29</sup>

On the opposite pole of this historical period is western culture and the belief of a new emerging cultural and social order. Because it was part of this historical process, the new art that was about to arise was to be historically based:

“... the future progress of Ornamental Art may be best secured by engrafting on the experience of the past the knowledge we may obtain by a return to Nature for fresh inspiration. To attempt to build up theories of art, or to form a style, independently of

27 This resurfaces in the correspondence with his parents: “Je suis allé verser mes larmes dans les vases grecs du musée archéologique, où elles se changèrent, grâce au magique concours des centaures musant dans des décors de forêt et de plantes, en larmes d'admiration et de béatitude ... On retombe à plat et l'on se dit : ‘Oui du noir sur de la terre cuite rouge, rien de plus, leur a suffi’ et l'on pense alors à cette époque inouïe où tout était raison, balancement, pondération, où la passion dans le vrai sens du mot était considérée comme crime à la raison. Et dans cette callée de calme et de paix vivant, où brillent Phidias, le Parthénon, les temples égyptiens, on ne voit qu'avec une sensation pénible, y grouiller tous ces démontés de l'art chrétien ; rythme, pondération, mesure (où donc serait Michel-Ange ?)” Jeanneret to parents, 24 September 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:46.

28 Mentioning L'Eplattenier's teaching, Le Corbusier stated: “Pour lui, trois grandes périodes demeurent: l'Égypte avec le lotus, la Grèce avec l'acanthé, le Gothique avec les fleurs et les bêtes des bois ...” Le Corbusier, “Confession,” in *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, 198. See also Gauthier, *Le Corbusier*, 20.

29 Jones, *Grammar*, 22.





FIG. 92 Owen Jones. *Grammaire*. Plate IV. Note ornament 17, bottom centre.

the past, would be an act of supreme folly. It would be at once to reject the experiences and accumulated knowledge of thousands of years. On the contrary, we should regard as our inheritance all the successful labours of the past, not blindly following them, but employing them simply as guides to find the true path”<sup>30</sup>

Jeanneret’s first architectural work allows us to ascertain the extent to which these ideas were etched in his thought. Looking at the ornamental pattern of the Villa Fallet’s south facade in the watercolor’s intermediate version (fig. 63), we can recognize its radial structure in the Egyptian ornaments of Jones’s illustrations (fig. 92). The final version evolved towards a more abstract pattern which could be extended *ad infinitum* (fig. 57). Although exploring the theme of the fir, the scheme is essentially based on Egyptian ornament. The treetop pattern—as already suggested—constitutes a vertical projection of a series of rows of firs alternately disposed on a slope, conveying a three-dimensional illusion by adopting the Egyptian model of Jones’s plate IV, no. 17, specially the left grove. Turning the Plate XI upside down (fig. 93), the ornamental pattern no. 21 is remarkably akin to Jeanneret’s. Beyond the pattern’s sequential scheme, it shows a similar curved representation of the treetops, which is also found in abundance in Greek ornament (e.g. Plate XVIII, no. 2, 7, 9, 15, and specially 18).<sup>31</sup>

Given the general dominance of Egyptian ornament in the Villa Fallet’s design, the adoption of the triangle as a representation of the local fir can also be read as an evocation of the Egyptian pyramid. The same applies to the triangular silhouette of the gable, or the red and yellow ochre, working as a concealed reference to sandstone. This suggests that the gable and its ornamental motifs are double-coded, evoking both the Jura landscape and the Egyptian pyramid. In attempting to validate a new modern design through its historical roots, Jeanneret predominantly adopted the Egyptian model

30 Idem., 2. These ideas pervade several of Jeanneret’s readings, such as Blanc: “Après tout, si les Grecs se sont élevés si haut, c’est qu’ils ont remanié selon leur beau génie l’héritage que leur avaient transmis l’Égypte et les nations orientales. Restons libres envers eux comme ils le furent eux-mêmes à l’égard de leurs devanciers. Le progrès dans les régions de l’art doit s’accomplir par deux éléments qui ne sont pas incompatibles : le respect et la réforme de la tradition.” Blanc, *Grammaire*, 248.

31 The details further extend the inspiration of the general scheme. A zigzag line parallel to the curved outline of the tree tops—also present in the central pine tree of the watercolor FLC2208, fig. 60—resembles the indented pyramid of the Arabian ornament (Plate XXXII, motifs 1-7) and echoes the stepped pyramidal form at the base of the treetops, quoting the Assyrian and Persian design (Plate XII, motif 2). The linear profile of the indented pyramid resembles the wooden floor and ceiling zigzag patterns of the villa’s hall. Here, the connection with several Egyptian ornamental patterns, such as in Plate IX, no. 2, 6, 7 is more obvious. Also the base of the gable’s pattern, forming a chequered horizontal band, seems to explore Egyptian models, such as those found in Plate VII, no. 23; Plate VIII, no. 7; or Plate XI, no. 15, equally found in other studies such as the watercolor FLC2208. In each treetop, the trunk is defined by three triangles interspersed by small squares, the roots being represented by two concentric squares. The most considerable degree of autonomy from the models of ancient cultures was achieved in the play of these geometric forms, showing the extent of the design’s abstraction—or, as Jones has put it, an ornament that is “in the nature of diagrams” (Grammar, 29). This is particularly clear when comparing it with the ornamental pattern on the plaster of the walls of Matthey-Doret’s music room, oversized and of an accentuated figurative nature.





FIG. 93 Owen Jones. *Grammaire*. Plate XI. Note ornamental patterns 21, bottom left; 15, line 4, row 3.

looking at it through Jones's lens, that is, as a pure, original style.

How does one square Jeanneret's interest in Egypt with his fierce rejection of Classicism at this early stage of his development? The answer lies in the nineteenth-century debate on the decay of architecture. Classicism was negatively associated by Jeanneret with nineteenth-century Neo-classicism, inspired by Roman classicism. But he looked at Egyptian art (as at Greek, Persian, Assyrian or Arabian) through the notion of "primitive" or "original." This is due to the influence of readings such as Jones's ornamental "catalogue," but also of L'Eplattenier, for whom, judging from Le Corbusier's later comments, Egypt and Greece meant "primitive," not Classical. This explains why he seems to mix Egyptian, Syrian, Persian and Greek ornamental themes in the Villa Fallet.

When Jeanneret departed for his Italian tour, then, Italy harbored the mystique of a broad imagery of the ancient world, of which it was partial inheritor, and the roots of which were ultimately traceable to Egypt. For L'Eplattenier and Jeanneret, this outlook was part of a broader philosophy. In the preceding chapter, I proposed that Jeanneret shared the contemporary belief in a new emerging historical era. He had absorbed this belief, in part, from Henry Provensal, for whom it partook in a broader evolutionary historical conception rooted in the German philosophical tradition. Provensal expressed it in rather esoteric terms by associating it with the idea of an eternal truth which runs through history. The new art, he said, must be anchored in the models of the past, retrieving essential and universal values which fulfill the spiritual needs of Man and express the "eternal truth"—art must bring together the truth of the past and that of the future, creating the invisible chain that, uniting Man to the infinite of Universe, resolves the Absolute.<sup>32</sup> Provensal had also introduced Jeanneret to Hegelian aesthetics and its discourse on the symbolic content of abstract form: it is through its symbolic dimension, Provensal argues, that art expresses eternal truth.<sup>33</sup>

32 Henry Provensal, *L'Art de demain: vers l'harmonie intégrale* (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1904), 2-3. On the influence of Provensal's book in Jeanneret see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 10-24. Provensal shared the contemporary belief on an ongoing historical process of development of civilization that was about to give rise to a new modern era, laying great stress on the Romantic conviction for a close association of art and cultural specificity, on the one hand, and search for a new artistic style expressing the new era and collective ideal, moral and religion, on the other hand. Within this process, he believed that the role of art was to redirect the new age, and that the social and artistic responsibility of the artists—seen as a cast apart—was to put in consonance the truth of the past with that of the future.

33 Art, Provensal claims, must be the expression of a given thought, the *idea*. It is the *idea* that constitutes the architecture's power of expression. Through abstraction, the manifestation of an idea can express the moral and spiritual needs of a nation. The new art must accomplish a "new harmony" through a synthesis of art and science (sentiment and reason) by being submitted to the universal laws of unity, number, and harmony which informed all great periods of Art. These universal principles, he goes on to argue, are to be found in nature's "forms essentielles." Crystalline forms are the most perfect and universal—such as those of mineral crystals—because they unite matter and spirit. Relating to the ideas of truth and symbol, these forms retrieve essential and universal values which fulfill the spiritual needs of Man and elevate the mind above the daily concerns. Architecture, the most abstract of the arts, should lead the way, attaining the absolute by virtue of the play of cubic volumes and voids, of light and shadow. It is upon this aesthetic background that he defines



During the Italian trip and Viennese sojourn, the reading of Schuré would deepen, clarify and contextualize much of these ideas on the ontological and esoteric dimension of art and its social role in a broader Romantic discourse.

The first book by Schuré that Jeanneret read was *Les grands initiés*, which L'Eplattenier had offered to him when he set off to Italy.<sup>34</sup> In this book, Schuré explores a similar notion of an esoteric knowledge, or universal and eternal truth shared by ancient philosophers. But here, the domain shifts from art and artists to the metaphysical and the elite of initiates. According to Schuré, the chain of transmission of this secret truth had been at the basis of the great periods of civilization thanks to their mystical prophets—Rama, Krishna, Hermes, Moses, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and Jesus. Discussing their metaphysical doctrines, Schuré focuses on the processes of spiritual revelation through which each one became a prophet or spiritual leader, exploring at length the imagery of sacred forests and mountains as secluded places of retreat and meditation prone to revelation or transcendental ceremonies. The main idea is that all religions are rooted in a single, universal religion, despite their diverse expressions. Put simply, Jeanneret found in Schuré the rationalist evolutionary view of history applied to religion.<sup>35</sup>

Turner has noted that, like Provensal's, Schuré's main theme is the need for spiritual revival of modern civilization, and that both books had a complementary role in strengthening Jeanneret's spirit of philosophical idealism and in understanding the true aim of art as an expression of spiritual forces. These, he suggests, led Jeanneret to the search of a universal abstract knowledge during his formative trips, a knowledge that would put Man in touch with a harmony underlying nature.<sup>36</sup> On the basis of a

architecture as “*l'expression cubique harmonieuse de la pensée, suivant certaines lois d'équilibre, de statique, de cohésion et de résistance des corps.*” Provensal, *L'Art de demain*, 158.159. Turner has noted the parallel between Provensal's definition of architecture and Le Corbusier's. Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 19-21.

<sup>34</sup> Édouard Schuré, *Les Grands initiés: esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions. Rama, Krishna, Hermès, Moïse, Orphée, Pythagore, Platon, Jésus* (Paris: Perrin, 1908). All subsequent citations refer to the 1921 edition. Jeanneret started reading *Les Grands initiés* in Italy and finished it in Vienna. See Jeanneret to parents, 8 October 1907, 31 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:49, 137. Jeanneret's reading of this book was first discussed by Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 24-29.

<sup>35</sup> Schuré's underlying critique of the church was not totally new for Jeanneret. His home town was the stage of a complex social and political context in which Christian associations were critically engaged in socialist labor movements. Faure's conference *La faillite du christianisme* is an example of the most extreme strands of those movements. A less radical one is the Christian socialism of the Protestant pastor Paul Pettavel, who exerted great influence in La Chaux-de-Fonds through his weekly newspaper *La Feuille du dimanche* and the Union Chrétienne de Jeunes Gens. Schuré's *Initiés* was apparently circulating among these circles, showing the extent to which it befitted Christian socialists and suggesting L'Eplattenier's connection with these movements. Commenting on Schuré's Book Jeanneret wrote: “M. Pettavel l'a prêté (le bouquin) à m. Evard, qui me dit l'avoir lu avec une profonde joie.” Jeanneret to parents, 31 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:137.

<sup>36</sup> Turner has noted that, among these initiates, Schuré regarded Pythagoras and his “scientific spirit” as the closest to the modern spirit, and that, like in Provensal, “scientific” is used by Schuré “not to refer to empirical activity, but to quite the opposite: abstract a priori thought and, in the specific case of Pythagoras, mystical numerology.” Jeanneret's markings and annotations indicate his particular interest in Pythagorean numerology, described by Schuré as a system unfolding

letter, where Jeanneret comments on Schuré's book, Brooks has argued that, by this time, Jeanneret was already struggling to reconcile rationalism and idealism, and that from Schuré he learned that the two positions could coexist without necessarily being reconciled. This enabled him to sustain often conflicting dualist and contradictory positions throughout his career.<sup>37</sup> But what this also meant was the beginning of a search for a synthesis of spirit and matter rooted in the nineteenth-century German philosophical tradition. Schuré had an extensive knowledge of German literature, specifically Wagner and Nietzsche, with whom he maintained personal contacts. Inspired by Wagner's dream of revitalizing mythology through drama, Schuré himself attempted to stage his sacred dramas by the early twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> His depictions of pagan rituals and processes of spiritual revelation expressed the German discourse on the *Gesamkunstwerk* and the Romantic search for a cultural renewal capable of liberating modern civilization from the Cartesian division of spirit and matter through myth.

It is in *Sanctuaires d'Orient*, where the Romantic line of thought is more comprehensively and clearly expounded, that we find the deep relevance of Schuré for Jeanneret.<sup>39</sup> At a religious level, it sparked Jeanneret's revision of his protestant education. At the artistic level, it meant the strengthening of the Hegelian discourse on form, the opening to the Nietzschean and Wagnerian discourses on the *Gesamkunstwerk*, and the French Symbolist discourse built upon the former. These were the main philosophical and aesthetic sources of Schuré. For Jeanneret, the reading of Schuré would be preparatory for the gradual maturation of these ideas during the subsequent sojourns in Paris and Germany. Through it, form and symbol would remain framed by an evolutionary historical view and the belief in a fundamental distinction between scientific and experiential knowledge.

Jeanneret started reading *Sanctuaires* after *Les grands initiés*.<sup>40</sup> The book is a travelling account of Schuré's own *voyage en Orient*—Egypt, Greece and Palestine—largely dominated by esoteric considerations on religion. Continuing the discussion on the “sainte vérité ésotérique” of *Les grands initiés*, it approaches religion by tracing the history of the split of an original pagan religion into several branches.

Schuré starts by addressing the importance for Christianity of reconciling sci-

mathematically from simple divine numbers expressing spiritual forces, bringing to mind Le Corbusier's Modulor system. Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 24-29.

<sup>37</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 31 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:137; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 123-124.

<sup>38</sup> See Stefan Arvidsson, “Aryan Mythology as Science and Ideology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 67, no. 2 (Jun. 1999): 327-54. It is worth adding that, as noted by Turner, Schuré was instrumental in familiarizing the French public with Wagner. Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 202n44.

<sup>39</sup> Schuré, *Sanctuaires d'Orient. Égypte, Grèce, Palestine* (Paris : Perrin, 1907). First published in 1898. All subsequent citations refer to the 1907 edition.

<sup>40</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 31 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:137.

ence and religion, putting an end to the antagonism between Church and University. For that to happen, an independent spiritual movement of transcendental nature should rise within the lay world, a movement capable of interpreting and applying the old tradition and symbols in a new, truly universal sense. All religions are branches of a common root, an original state of mankind stemming from a synthesis of religion, science and art that was found in the lost pagan relationship between man and the “living” natural world animated by divine forces. At one pole of this historical process is the myth of the East: the evocation of the Orient is a sigh of the soul towards that intellectual and spiritual unity. On the opposite pole is western civilization: Europe still is the intellectual centre of humankind, where the future and modern consciousness are being shaped. It must therefore manage to retrieve the ontological principles, so that the twentieth century may rise and walk towards the conquest of the future.

If modern thinking is to realize the future through an original state of mankind—the “*unité primordiale et finale*” of science and religion—it must do so by retrieving the ancient traditions and symbols. Three countries are the great sources, not only of the occult tradition of the Occident, but also of its intellectual, artistic, moral and social life: Egypt, Greece, and Palestine. I will briefly survey the importance that Schuré attributes to each of these, from the standpoint of its significance for Jeanneret.

Abstract, symbolic form and pagan existence are the key aspects of the discussion about Egypt. Ancient Egypt is the inheritor of the pagan understanding of the universe, having elaborated the best expression of the ontological relationship between man and nature—the “Grand Pan,” the sky, and the sun. Hegelian resonances emerge in this context. Egypt is the model of this sacred ontology not only because it focused on the idea of the absolute, but also because it was able to express it through symbols. All Egyptian architectural forms express a thought; they speak the language of eternity, therefore constituting the sanctuary not only of the “*Idées-Mères*,” but also of the “*Symboles Générateurs*”: the pyramid, the sphinx, and the winged solar disk. The pyramid expresses the Absolute and the Eternal in two ways. On one level, its form is a symbol of the immutable through abstraction, representing not the image of the living god, but its geometric “Law,” the pentahedron.<sup>41</sup> On another level, the Absolute is expressed by combining science and religion within the perfectly built geometric form. As for the second and third symbols, they are gathered in the Sphinx, concurrently evoking Isis and the solar religion of Osiris. Its form and orientation relate to the Guardian of the rising Sun. Facing east, it allegedly was originally crowned with a

41 “Le triangle superposé au carré et aboutissant à la pointe est (dans la tradition occulte) le signe trinitaire de la vie superposé au signe quaternaire de l’univers et de ses quatre éléments. Par les quatre faces de la pyramide, le triangle se résorbe dans l’unité divine dont il émane. L’image de l’Absolu ne peut être que géométrique.” Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 83-86.



golden disk lit by the first rays of the sun, reconciling the Eternal Male with the Eternal Female, “the great soul of the world which breathes nature, animals, and men with life and the most perfect intellectual principles.”<sup>42</sup>

Greece and Palestine are the two sides of the epistemological schism of the Egyptian legacy, having inherited and translated the pagan understanding of the universe into their cosmogony and symbols. Osiris and Isis became, in Greece, the old cults of Orpheus under the names of Dionysos, Demeter, and Perséphone, while in Judaea the male doctrine of Ammon-Ra became, through Moses, the *raison d'être* of a people, giving birth to the social idea and universal justice.

The discussion about Greece reflects the German theories on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* through the notion of “life entirety” (*Vie intégrale*). If Egypt had formulated the essential principles of the “science of the spirit,” the Greeks have wanted to heroically and nobly live an existence transfigured by art, manifesting the divine by the beauty of their movements. They achieved the “miracle of glorifying life” in its three stages, physical, emotional and intellectual, having created the three arts required for life: gymnastics, for the beauty of the body; the tragedy, for the purification of the soul through pain; the mysteries, for his deliverance and elevation to the supreme truth.<sup>43</sup>

Three paradigmatic nineteenth-century imageries emerge in this discussion: (1) the Dorian Greek fighter, expressing the cult of the “*beauté corporelle*,” joy of life and disdain of death, described through the Olympic Games and the idyllic landscape of Olympus, its sacred mountains and forests of pines and olive trees; (2) the procession-al ceremonies of the Panathenaea, equally involving a mythic geography, described through a ritual narrative—a lived-through ontological experience climbing the hill until reaching the interior of the Parthenon, where Minerva appeared as the divine thought that rules the world; (3) the Greek tragedy, projecting life in the drama, the ultimate key of which could only be found in ritual, reconnecting man with God and glorifying man in all its stages through the representation of transcendental life—“*la vie une*.” The chief example of the Greek ritual was the mysteries of Eleusis. The aim was to reveal to the initiates the comprehensive doctrine in its triple perception, of the senses, soul, and spirit, “making gleam the Invisible behind the Visible” and “the truth behind the symbol.” In this way it allowed for the cessation of these separate life stages re-establishing “*la vie une*.”<sup>44</sup>

As for Palestine, the most significant aspect is the implication of Islam in the his-

42 Ibid., 88-91.

43 Ibid., 187-220.

44 The section about Greece ends with the recreation of the sacred drama of Eleusis throughout about forty pages. This was something which he had also attempted in *Les grands initiés* in a shorter version. Schuré, “Les Mystères d’Éleusis,” in *ibid.*, 421-439.

torical process underlying western culture. Jerusalem, a city divided into three neighborhoods, three races and religions—Judaism, Islamism, and Christianity—gathers the split symbols of the universal religion. The Saint-Sepulchre is seen as containing the “Unitarian thought” and the “radiant Soul” that must embrace humankind. And yet, Schuré’s attention is primarily driven to the mosque of Omar. While the universal religion split into Christianity and Judaism, Mohamed founded a new religion proceeding from Moses and Christ. Mediating the old tradition of Israel and the Christian official representation of Byzantium, the Muslims re-established the first sanctuary of the world, building the mosque of Omar in the place of Solomon’s temple. In short, the mosque embodies the invisible chain that started in Egypt, reconciling the Orient and the west.

In arguing that Islam aimed at reuniting the epistemological break between Judaism and Christianity, Schuré places it in the path of the historical development of western culture. In so doing, he also implicitly presents Muslim architecture in the trail of western architecture, all along with Byzantine architecture. This explains why the first section of *Sanctuaires* is devoted to “L’Égypte musulmane.” Schuré starts the section with a note explaining that he had been deeply impressed by Muslim Egypt and that only by visiting its places and architecture he became fully aware of the role of Islam in the hierarchy of religions and in drawing forth a future synthesis of science, religion and art.<sup>45</sup> In sum, Jeanneret could now involve Islam in the evolutionary historical development upon which a new era would rise.

Incidentally, Schuré’s arguments ultimately fall into the nineteenth-century praise for Gothic architecture and the view of the Gothic as the western expression of the legacy of the ancient world. The historical account of the ontological transmission of pagan religion, extending beyond the bounds of this work, ends with what Schuré considers to be the last attempt to re-establish a Universal religion: the crusades of the Templars who founded the order of laic knights to give continuity to the work of Moses. Having created its own cult and doctrine, the Order of the Temple was however destroyed by the French king and church. This was, he believes, the first social crime operated by the Church.<sup>46</sup>

The main point to be made is that, for Jeanneret, Schuré’s *Sanctuaires* clarified and broadened the Romantic discourse and the evolutionary conception of history, exerting a long-term influence on Le Corbusier. The first signs of this influence are

45 Ibid., 13n1.

46 The Christian Church is, Schuré vehemently posits, a machine of priests, a political instrument of the clergy, and an instrument of supreme domination. But despite the end of the Templars, the Nemesis of the eternal laws would maintain a “faraway shine of the temple of Jerusalem” through the Rose-Croix and Masonic orders, which, having retaken some of its ideas, contributed to foment and burst the French Revolution. Ibid., 374-77, 382-83.

immediately felt. In the next lines I will try to chart them, suggesting their connections with some aspects of Le Corbusier's work.

The first significant aspect concerns the idea that the new emerging society must be achieved by retrieving the pagan relationship between man and nature. If we accept that this idea influenced Jeanneret, two main changes would be expectable, in the way he looked at nature and at religion. As far as nature is concerned, one may start by noting that, when Jeanneret arrived in Italy, he seemed more seduced by the Italian landscape than by architecture. He often extolled the landscape in his correspondence, advising his parents to return to Italy not to visit its cities but its landscape.<sup>47</sup> Passanti has noted that Jeanneret arrived and left Italy by boat, spoke of Italy as if being a legendary island in the middle of the ocean, and used the term "terre" to refer to Italy instead of country (pays), revealing his mythic outlook over Italy.<sup>48</sup> By the end of the Viennese stay, on February 2, while or after reading *Sanctuaires*, "la terre d'Italie" became "la Terre sacrée," imbued with an ideal to which he should be faithful.<sup>49</sup> On February 11, this is explicitly associated with Schuré.<sup>50</sup> This suggests the beginning of a gradual abandoning of a Ruskinian understanding of nature as God's creation and the progressive adherence to Schuré's lay movement and its aim to recover the ultimate meaning of pagan religion. As far as religion is concerned, this would expectably entail a progressive distancing from his protestant education. If Schuré accused the Church of having corrupted Christianity, Protestantism was not spared.<sup>51</sup> Significantly, when that same year Jeanneret interrupted the Parisian sojourn to spend Christmas in his homeland, his father wrote in his journal about the complete modification of his beliefs and religious faith, which nonetheless coexisted with confidence in the future.<sup>52</sup>

A second aspect relates to the Academies. Schuré's critical view of the church matched that of the university. This may explain Jeanneret's refusal to attend a Viennese school of arts, and later when he set off to Paris, his decision to attend a school only to improve his technical knowledge.<sup>53</sup> And the fact of having mainly attended his-

47 Jeanneret to parents, 24 October 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:65.

48 Passanti, "Toscane," 19.

49 "... ce pays à l'horizon infini, où tout là-bas, par dessus l'ondulation des pins, un triangle orange, intensément lumineux éclatait dans l'opacité bleue du crépuscule, une voile qui disait que là était la mer sans bornes ... c'était 'le Calme', digne, olympien, tout de suite baptisé ... Toscane, cette seconde Grèce, patrie de tout ce que le cœur a su créer ! ... Restons fidèle à l'idéal de la poésie de la Terre sacrée." Jeanneret to Albert, 2 February 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:147-149.

50 "... ces phénomènes de transmission de la pensée à travers des pays entiers, s'observent de nos jours toujours plus nombreux (paraît-il). On devine-là une force inouïe qui va un jour se révéler ; la force qui a fait les miracles des prophètes, des prêtres égyptiens, indoux (sic) ou persans. Schuré le constate comme une force terrible, des plus dangereuses ou d'une influence quasi-divine suivant les cas." Jeanneret to parents, 11 February 1908, repr. in *Ibid.*, 1:150-154.

51 Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 400-401.

52 Jeanneret's father, quoted in Dumont, *Le Corbusier: Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 194.

53 Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 2 March 1908; Jeanneret to Chapallaz, 2 March 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 137-144.

tory courses during the Parisian stay does not contradict the view, rather reflecting the evolutionist conception of art history underlying Schuré. Confessing his doubts on the Viennese modern movement to his brother and criticizing, among other things, the understanding of art and art history underlying it, he had written: "... l'étude sérieuse ferait placer en première ligne l'Égypte puis la Grèce et tout au bout la Chrétienté pour l'expression des idées de grande philosophie !" <sup>54</sup> Looking ahead, then, Schuré may explain Le Corbusier's lifelong rejection of the Academies. In *Croisade*, for instance, the association between Le Corbusier's view of his own work as a crusade and Schuré's ideas on the last attempt to re-establish a universal religion by the lay knights of the Order of Temple goes far beyond the title. Ideas such as a "broad emerging crusade towards the universal thought," a "renewed life form," or the search for a new "balance of spirit and matter" to be found in a "millennial relationship between man and nature," clearly go back to Schuré's essential attitude about retrieving an original relationship between men and nature, reworked under the thesis of a new machine age. <sup>55</sup>

The same may be suggested about the opening statement "Les peuples qui se sont donné un plan vont vers la lumière," leading us to a third aspect of Schuré's legacy. <sup>56</sup> This concerns Schuré's view of the symbols of ancient Egypt as the means for an epistemological experience, through which this opening statement may be read as a double-coded metaphor: it evokes at once the positivist development of society based on progress and the retrieving of an original relationship with the natural world, symbolically expressed and lived through an architectural ordering axis oriented towards the sun and the landscape. For while seeing the geometry and axial arrangement as the means for an epistemological experience uniting science and religion, Schuré discusses the meaning of this axis, in the worship of Aryan humanity, as an immaterial light that transverse all the ancient religions through the cults of the sun. <sup>57</sup>

Jeanneret could recognize here the Hegelian arguments on form that he had already encountered in Provencal and in Blanc's discussion of the aesthetic category of the Sublime, the archetype of which was the Egyptian pyramid. And beyond the association between Schuré's "Grand Pan" and Blanc's assertions on the straight line, infinity and the Sublime in nature—as in the case of the rays of the sun, the endless plains, or ocean <sup>58</sup>—Jeanneret could also recognize here the Semperian assertions on "direc-

<sup>54</sup> Jeanneret to Albert, 15 December 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:103-104.

<sup>55</sup> Le Corbusier, *Croisade, ou, le crépuscule des académies* (Paris: G. Crés et Cie, 1933), 17-18, 25-26.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Schuré, *Les Grands initiés*, 293-294.

<sup>58</sup> "Pythagore ... regardait la ligne droite comme représentant l'infini ... Si nous regardons la scène du monde, nous voyons la ligne droite apparaître et dominer dans tous les spectacles sublimes : les rayons du soleil et des astres, la majesté des plaines de l'Océan, les confins de l'horizon, les carreaux de la foudre, les rochers à pic, les abîmes ... c'est que le sublime, comme nous l'avons dit, appartient à l'univers, et que le beau est le partage de l'humanité." Blanc, *Grammaire*, 25.

tion.” In this sense, Schuré’s epistemological experience could be accommodated upon Jeanneret’s paradigmatic experience of the Jura Mountains and its transposition to the Villa Fallet, reconciling the vertical and the horizontal directions. But with Schuré, the longitudinal axis, which in the villa is a symbol of man’s *will* associated with the experience of the Sublime, acquires a fundamental existential meaning and experiential dimension. This provides the link between the paradigmatic experience of the Jura landscape and the initial proposition of this study concerning the fundamental philosophical world-view involved in the axis governing Le Corbusier’s architecture of the 1920s.

In enacting a renewed relationship between man and nature, Schuré’s discussion on geometry and meaningful axes is brought to the realm of ritual through the concept of *life entirety*, fostering the idea of life as a daily ritual through the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This fourth aspect, binding the preceding ones, frames Le Corbusier’s long search for a spiritual dimension of aesthetic experience. This is made manifest early in Venice. A letter from November 17, reveals that it was not architecture or the city that marked Jeanneret, but the spiritual experience of witnessing masses at the Byzantine basilica of St. Mark. He describes them as a comprehensive experience which concerns architecture, music, the gestures of the priests and the “grandiose mise en scène”; a spiritual experience that vivifies the faith of a people; a “sensation religieuse ressentie en plein” going beyond the matters of the heart, the senses, or the spirit.<sup>59</sup> This clearly resonates with some descriptions of religious feasts and ceremonies of the occult in *Les grands initiés*—which he was reading by then—involving dance, music and prayers, and with the idea that poets translate for the horde the sublime truths into living images. Schuré explores these ceremonies through the notion of “vie complète,” a life embracing a synthesis of science and religion. Jeanneret could accommodate this imagery upon L’Eplattenier’s Sunday walks in the mountains with his students, reading the masses at St. Mark’s as a model both for life and for a new spiritual condition of modern man.<sup>60</sup>

St. Mark’s, in turn, anticipates Jeanneret’s later adherence to opera during the Viennese sojourn, particularly Richard Wagner’s, which gradually becomes his preference. The comparison between both is provided by Jeanneret himself, while enthusiastically writing about Wagner’s music, the “effets de scènes magiques” and the light. He calls his operas “l’art complet,” providing a state of spiritual isolation and transcendental experience. From the beginning of February onwards, while reading or having

<sup>59</sup> Jeanneret to parents, November 17, 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:78-79. Equally telling is that, after describing this episode, Jeanneret asked his parents for a Bible, noting his specific interest in the Old Testament. (*ibid.*, 82)

<sup>60</sup> On L’Eplattenier’s discourse see chap. 1, n11.



finished *Santuaires*, he speaks of Wagner as involving questions of spirit, science and beauty, as being profoundly philosophical, and as a large expression of human thought. These words clearly resonate with Schuré, who points to Wagner's art as an expression of the contemporary strand that strives to reunite science and religion. Wagner represents, Schuré stresses, a "transcendental idealism" reflecting the search for "l'unité primitive" in a new thought.<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, the ideas about transcendental experiences of revelation and their connections with the German theories on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* are reinforced in *Santuaires*, under the term of "life entirety" (*vie intégrale*). There it is argued that the divine manifests itself to men through the prophets—involving the notion of spiritual transport through ecstasy characteristic of the processes of epiphany—and art, which, by being a manifestation of the divine, provides the necessary means to the epiphany. Jeanneret, who was prone to this kind of transcendental experiences, would explore them more than once, notably when he wrote of the moment of epiphany that, significantly, took place in a Byzantine church during the religious feasts of Mount Athos.<sup>62</sup>

Jeanneret's response to the masses at St. Mark's and Wagner's operas thus involves Schuré's notion of life entirety. Both fuse ritual, art and life, representing an existence transfigured by art and a model of "la vie une"; in short, a living, total work of art. Schuré therefore seems to have sparked the idea of merging art and everyday existence in Jeanneret, infusing in it a universal spiritual dimension. This, I think, can be connected with Le Corbusier's search for an architecture expressing the absolute, but also with the notion of a modern life stemming from a synthesis of matter and spirit. Like in Schuré's view of ancient Greece, not only is art the way through which man is put in contact with the divine, but life on earth becomes itself a living representation expressing the divine.

If the notion of life entirety corresponds to a life model conceived of as the *mise en action* of the divine through art, this life must re-establish—we have seen—an original relationship between everyday existence and nature. Moreover, this relationship is enacted by geometry and the axis governing it. This, we are tempted to propose, constitutes the basis of the life model envisaged by Le Corbusier for the inhabitants of his architecture and urban plans, and of the philosophical world-view underlying his work of the 1920s. Through it, geometry and ordering axis are endowed with a comprehensive and meaningful experiential dimension.

This said, a fifth and last aspect deserves our attention. It relates to the connec-

61 Jeanneret to parents, 4, 5 and 7 December 1907; 7 and 12 January, 11 February 1908; Jeanneret to Albert, 2 and 3 February 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:87, 92-98, 125, 128, 143-145, 153. Schuré, *Santuaires*, 73-74.

62 See Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 146-50.

tions between Schuré and Jeanneret's awakening interest in eastern art and architecture, which would ultimately lead him to undertake the journey to the East. During this period Jeanneret was clearly captivated by the collections of several museums, be it the Greek and Egyptian collections of the Florentine museum of archaeology or the Viennese Hof-Museum. His growing interest in eastern architecture resurfaces in his correspondence. On October 24, while reading Schuré, he sent a letter to his parents with a list of books to be shipped to Vienna. Among them were books on Cairo, Cordoba and Granada. On November 1, from Venice, he reinforced the former demand. Blanc's *Grammaire* is added and underscored, followed by books on Cairo, Cordoba and Granada, of which he felt absolute necessity.<sup>63</sup> On one level, Jeanneret probably felt he needed them for the design of the villas Stotzer and Jaquemet. On another level, this request is also a symptom of a broader interest for the East, sparked by the reading of Schuré, and which would continue in Paris with readings of a significant array of authors.

The connections with Schuré are already felt in Jeanneret's description of the masses at St. Mark's. In arguing that they echo Schuré's discussion of the spiritual experiences of revelation of the eastern ancient prophets, one can hardly fail to associate Jeanneret's account with the fact that St. Mark's is a Byzantine church. In this respect, it seems particularly instructive to compare this purely spiritual and subjective approach to St. Mark's, where architecture was just the envelope or scenario for a revelatory religious experience, and his interest for Santa Croce, totally oblivious to the relationship between spatial arrangement and ritual function. Another example takes place by the end of the Viennese sojourn, in February, when Jeanneret was captivated by an Arabian room at the Museum of Decorative Art (fig. 94). Writing to L'Eplattenier about his intended departure to Paris—instead of Germany, where L'Eplattenier wished him to study contemporary design in a school or in an architect's office—he will use the example of the Arabian room to argue that his artistic education should be based in the study of nature and museums, by which he meant ancient art and architecture.<sup>64</sup>

Jeanneret's disagreement with L'Eplattenier about Paris thus entails a new attention to Muslim and Byzantine architecture on the one hand, and a new awareness of architectural form and its symbolic content on the other—both inspired by his reading of Schuré. This is particularly clear in the way Schuré speaks of the mosque of Omar. Schuré writes about the dome in the same terms he had spoken of the Egyptian pyramid, that is, as an expression of the Absolute through a geometric form that combines science and religion. Jeanneret would easily associate this with the “revelation of the

63 Jeanneret to parents, 24 October and 1 November 1907, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:67, 68.

64 Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 2 March 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 138.

dome” which he had experienced in Florence. The connection becomes particularly clear if we think of Schuré’s depiction of Jerusalem seen à vol d’oiseau from the terrace of the convent where he stood: the silhouette of the urban fabric dominated by two huge domes, one of the Saint-Sepulchre—the tomb of Christ—the other of the mosque of Omar—the tomb of Jehovah—bounded by the horizontal line of the ridge of the Moab, the mountains that stop the eye like “the wall of Destiny.” The two domes dominating the city, Schuré argues, are evocations of the solar arch of Ammon-Ra, embodying the divine in its eternal metamorphosis.<sup>65</sup>

If St. Mark’s marked the debut of a long search for a spiritual dimension of aesthetic experience, the association between Jeanneret’s interest in eastern architecture and Schuré seems inevitable, particularly considering the itinerary of the 1911 journey. Jeanneret visited Turkey in search of Muslim and Byzantine architecture, Greece, in search of the icon of classicism, Athos, also for Byzantine architecture; he had planned to go to Egypt, and confessed his desire to visit the mosque of Omar, which, according to Schuré, embedded a secret sense of the future reconciliation of the Orient and Occident.<sup>66</sup> All this after the Parisian sojourn, where he would obsessively study Notre-Dame and the history of Gothic architecture—a symbol of an uncorrupted Christianity according to Schuré—presented as the culminating phase of a long process of development of church architecture reaching back to antiquity. Significantly, Schuré stressed that the study *in loco* of historical “places” was a vital means for epistemological achievement.

Having discussed the theoretical implications of this initial traveling period through the fundamental influence of Schuré, something still must be said about the lingering of Jeanneret’s paradigmatic experience of space. Looking at the annotations on the side of the plan and section of the Arabian room above mentioned (fig. 94), two main aspects are particularly revealing. First, Jeanneret was interested in the way through which architecture and ornament generate a specific mood, establishing an analogy with the forest: “Le tout donnant l’impression de la nature, d’1 sous-bois où l’on pense s’étendre comme dans l’herbe en rêver.” This recalls the way he described Pisa (*sur la place du Dôme, dans l’herbe, avec la calme et le beau ciel bleu comme compagnons*) and goes in pair with his praise for the wooden latticework of the windows, reminding him of the sky seen through branches.<sup>67</sup> Second, while noting the scale

65 Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 320-322. It is not known when Jeanneret acquired *Sanctuaires*, but if indeed L’Eplattenier sent it to Jeanneret together with *Les Grands initiés*, it is more than likely that Jeanneret had at least thumbed through it during the Italian itinerary. This might suggest a connection between Schuré and Jeanneret’s reaction to the Florentine dome.

66 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 168.

67 “Le gd. charme tiens au manque total de meubles ; aux fenêtres barrées d’1 résille de croisillon qui forme comme le

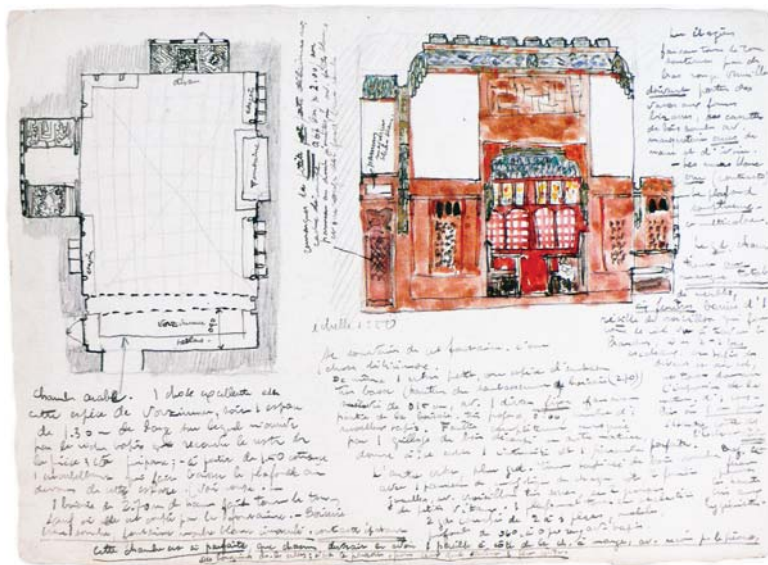


FIG. 94 Jeanneret. Vienna. Arabian room, Museum of Decorative Art.

contrast of the receding spaces of the divan and window, their low ceilings and the elevated sitting area, Jeanneret writes on the anteroom, preparing the entrance into the room, the wooden lintel and the uncovered floor marking the transition to the main space.<sup>68</sup> Jeanneret thus read the room in terms of a temporal experience—a spatial sequence, from the anteroom preparing the entrance, to the main space, and finally to the elevated sitting area overlooking the sky filtered by the branch-like latticework. The connection with his early design for the Villa Fallet is instructive, from the idea of a spatial progression leading to the final elevated view to the allegory of a natural space.

This shows that, by the end of the Viennese stay, the instruments used by Jeanneret to evaluate architecture had undergone little change, remaining associated with the analogy of the proceedings of nature. This remaining steadfast in the Romantic categories of his education led him to reject Vienna and the “hygienic” architecture of the Viennese avant-garde.<sup>69</sup> And yet, he had started to look at architecture more abstractly in Florence, be it in Santa Croce or in the approach to the dome, and Schuré had imprinted on him a fundamental theoretical change that he would deepen in Par-

...

ciel vu à travers les branches, à ces 2-3 bas escabeaux, aux tapis des divans et du sol. Le tout donnant l'impression de la nature, d'1 sous-bois où l'on pense s'étendre comme dans l'herbe en réver. Bref. ça ferait les hautes cris aux hygiénistes.” [emphasis by Jeanneret]

<sup>68</sup> “Chambre arabe. 1 chose excellente est cette espèce de Vorzimmer, soit 1 espace de 1.30m de large sur lequel n'arrive pas le riche tapis que recouvre le reste de la pièce ; ça prépare ; à partir de 1.50m commence 1 encorbellement qui fait baisser le plafond au dessus de cette espace (voir coupe).”

<sup>69</sup> Jeanneret dismissively wrote about Otto Wagner's architecture: “Impression générale: une cuisine hollandaise, ou un W.C. modèle (je parle tout spécialement de l'intérieur de l'église Steinhof, de la poste et du Hall Deininger.)” Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 26 February 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 121-122. The comment on the hygienists that he wrote in the drawing of the Arabian room relates to this view of the Viennese avant-garde.

is, Germany and during the *voyage d'Orient*—from Hegelian aesthetics to a Romantic philosophical world-view.

Disappointed with Vienna and the avant-garde movement, Jeanneret and Perrin were already thinking of moving to Germany by December 15. But the long time it took to design the villas Stotzer and Jaquemets forced them to postpone the departure. Having finished the plans on February 20, they finally decided upon Paris, more suitable for Jeanneret's Latin leanings.<sup>70</sup> By this time, Jeanneret had embraced the faith in a universal movement: "Le mouvement Moderne universel est un poupon actuellement, un poupon qui deviendra un géant, où se développera-t-il, Allemagne, France, pays du Nord, etc ..."<sup>71</sup> The two friends set off on the 15th of March 1908.

<sup>70</sup> For a comprehensive account of the Viennese sojourn and the design of the two villas see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 117-150. As for Jeanneret's Latin leanings—associated with the Jura regionalist movement—one of the arguments to move to Paris was explicit enough: "Mes goûts sont latins..." Jeanneret to Parents, March 8 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:163.

<sup>71</sup> Jeanneret to Parents, 8 March 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:166.



### 3 PARIS, 1908-1909

Since Turner's study on Jeanneret's early readings, scholars have often looked at the Parisian stay as a period of confrontation between his earlier idealist education, on the one hand, and the rationalism he inherited from the French discourse on the Gothic and from August Perret, on the other hand. The dialectics of idealism and rationalism provides the unifying thread of this chapter, in which I will suggest that Jeanneret accommodated this dialectics upon the theoretical framework of Schuré, absorbing rationalism and idealism as complementary rather than as opposite concepts.<sup>1</sup>

Jeanneret arrived in Paris on the 25th of March 1908, allegedly planning to expand his technical education in an art school.<sup>2</sup> Instead, he continued his auto-didactic agenda, mainly driven by his previous readings. His single attempt at a formal education was the *École des arts décoratifs*: Brooks has noted that he arrived three weeks after the exams had taken place, and although he was admitted late in September, he failed to register. He scribbled a list of six lecture courses at the *École des Beaux-Arts* on the back of a sketch—mathematics, descriptive geometry, stereotomy, construction, history of architecture, and theory of architecture. Eventually he attended Lucien Magne's history courses on medieval architecture and Italian Renaissance, Paul-Louis Boeswillwald's course on Romanesque and Gothic, Paul-Louis Monduit's course on construction, and Romain Rolland's course on Georg Friedrich Händel at the Sorbonne; he also studied mathematics with a private teacher.<sup>3</sup>

His second objective was to work in the office of an architect, which he only did approximately three months after his arrival. In April 1908, he visited Grasset, whose address he had seen by chance in a telephone book. Complaining about the decadence of French architecture and the "Académie," Grasset placed his hope in a construction

1 On the Parisian stay and the influence of Perret in Jeanneret see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 45-69; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 151-183; Giovanni Fanelli and Roberto Gargiani, *Perret e Le Corbusier: Confronti* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1990), esp. chap. 1, "L'Apprendistato di Le Corbusier nello studio della 'Perret Frères', 1908-09"; Pierre Saddy, "Deux héros de l'époque machiniste, ou le passage du témoin," in *Encyclopedie*, 300-305; Passanti, "Skyscrapers," 52-65. Among Jeanneret/Le Corbusier's writings see Le Corbusier, "Confession," in *L'Art décoratif*, 201-09; Dumont, *Le Corbusier : Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 145-197; Baudouï and Dercelles, *Le Corbusier, Correspondance*, vol. 1, 169-287.

2 From Vienna, he writes to L'Eplattenier: "Mon éducation artistique je la fais dans les musées (pas de peinture bien entendu) et dans la nature et point n'est besoin de Olbrich ou de Curjel pour m'infiltrer le goût ... N'est-il pas logique que je fasse du technicum maintenant, du stage ensuite ? Et à cette question je vois 2 solutions excellentes. 1° Une solution Paris, où il y a des écoles de construction (et non pas des beaux-arts comme vous avez cru) où je pourrais suivre des cours ; puis comme on travaille à l'heure dans les bureaux, je pourrais facilement faire 5 ou 6 heures de pratique par jour ... 2° Aller à Zürich chez vos Weideli et consorts et suivre des cours au Poly ...". Then he adds that Paris has the most "inestimables collections des musées, ethnologiques, arts industriels, Trocadéro, Notre-Dame, qui seraient mes maîtres en matière artistique." Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 2 March 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 143-144.

3 See Brooks, *Formative Years*, 156-157.

technique, the “béton armé,” and sent him to the Perret brothers. Jeanneret started a part-time collaboration at 25bis rue Franklin at the end of June, which would last until November 9, 1909.<sup>4</sup>

Signs that Schuré markedly shaped Jeanneret’s thinking are provided by a general survey of his Parisian activity, which shows that, as noted by Turner and Brooks, Jeanneret’s interest in acquiring complementary technical skills went together with the strengthening of his idealism. After his arrival, Jeanneret mainly devoted his time to Notre-Dame and to study in libraries and museums in the pursuit of “la vérité.”<sup>5</sup> The museums represented the continuation of his interest in ancient and primitive cultures. As for libraries, he frequented daily the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève during the first three months. There is not much information about his readings there, but we know that he read Edouard Corroyer and Viollet-le-Duc (whose *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* he soon bought with his first month’s pay as a collaborator of Perret), and that he must have read a book about statics.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast with the absence of books on construction, Jeanneret’s personal library shows a dominant interest in primitive and ancient cultures. Among the books acquired in this period are both Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Louis Ménard *Histoire des anciens peuples de l’Orient*, Gustave LeBon’s *Civilizations de l’Inde*, Gustave Flaubert’s *Salammbô* (a historical novel set in Carthage during the third century BC), Paul Claudel’s *Connaissance de l’Est* (a 1907 collection of poems devoted to the East), Joris-Karl Huysman’s *La Cathédrale* (a novel focused on Gothic art and architecture), and Rousseau’s *Confessions*. In addition, he also read books such as Claude Farrère’s *L’Homme qui assassina* (1906), a novel with extensive descriptions of Istanbul, its mosques and landscape, and Romain Rolland’s *Vie de Beethoven*, among other essays of the author.<sup>7</sup>

Two books had an important role in strengthening Jeanneret’s idealism, Fried-

4 The encounter with Grasset is described in several sources: Gauthier, *Le Corbusier*, 27; Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 29-30; Le Corbusier, “Confession,” 204-05; idem., “Perret,” *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* no. 7 (October 1932): 7.

5 Le Corbusier, “Confession,” 201-02.

6 For a list of the museums and of the themes of the visits see Le Corbusier, “Confession,” 202-03. On his readings on statics see Jeanneret to parents, 16 May and 14 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:180, 188.

7 Beyond these, he also purchased other literary works such as Charles Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du mal*, and a collection of literary essays by Jules Laforgue, *Moralités légendaires*. From his correspondence we know that he read Émile Zola’s *L’Œuvre* (a novel about an artist who rejected the neoclassicism of the official exhibitions and strove to create a new art), Robert de La Sizeranne’s *Ruskin et la religion de la beauté*, a short monograph on Socrates, Ruskin’s *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and the first pages of Maurice Maeterlinck’s essay *Le Temple enseveli*. For Rolland’s, Zola’s, La Sizeranne’s, Ruskin’s and Maeterlinck’s books see Jeanneret to parents, 29 September 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:213, 221-22. The remaining, belonging to Jeanneret’s private library from this period, have been identified in Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 55-56. On the absence of books on technical matters, noted by Turner, Brooks has added that, having had in his hands a copy of Max Du Bois translation of E. Mörsch’s *Le Béton armé*, he only thumbed through it. Brooks has further noted the absence of contemporary art books. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 175-176. For Jeanneret’s mention of Du Bois translation see Jeanneret to parents, 9 August 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:280. As for Farrère, Jeanneret mentioned in 1911 that he had read his book two years earlier. Jeanneret to William Ritter, 1 March 1911.

rich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. According to Turner, Jeanneret was struck by Nietzsche's conception of the Superman (*Uebermensch*), which has much in common with the idea of Provensal's elite of artists and Schuré's Initiates, as well as their emphasis on a new emerging era. Nietzsche's hero, withdrawing from the world into the mountains, reinforced the ideas of loneliness, meditation, contemplation and self sacrifice to Mankind, contributing to Jeanneret's own personification of a prophetic role in the creative process of seeking out ideal principles and the absolute truth.<sup>8</sup> In turn, Jeanneret's interest in Renan's non-religious approach to the life of Jesus in *Vie de Jésus* bridges between Nietzsche and Schuré. This is particularly explicit in the similarities between Renan's concept of a "pure religion" (*religion pure*) based on an ideal and the characterization of Christ within a wider context of pagan religion in Schuré's *Sanctuaires*. In the passages bracketed by Jeanneret we find, as noted by Turner, the interest in the prophetic figure retreating into the mountains to meditate, in the search for perfection, the renouncing of earthly concerns and devotion to spiritual matters, all along with the characterization of Jesus as a Utopian social reformer. These two books, Turner has argued, intensified Jeanneret's idealism, being at the basis of Le Corbusier's search for a new social, aesthetic and spiritual order within the context of an upcoming higher form of Man.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout the Parisian sojourn, the ancient Oriental cultures were a privileged theme. In June 1909, for instance, he undertook an eight day trip to England with L'Eplattenier. To his parents he only mentioned "les merveilles de l'Orient et de l'Extreme-Orient" which he had seen in museums. Two months later, while visiting his brother in Paris, Albert commented in a letter to their parents on Ch.-Edouard's "oriental imagination."<sup>10</sup> And in January 1910, already in La Chaux-de-Fonds, he designed the project for the building of the Ateliers d'art, a design with obvious ancient and orientalist echoes. Incidentally, Jeanneret often adopted key terms and ideas in his correspondence which are traceable to Schuré, such as *culte de la nature, irradiante, poésie de la Terre, prêtre de la nature*, the idea of *beauté corporelle* or the rejection of the church.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 56-61. On the influence of Nietzsche in Jeanneret see also Cohen, "Le Corbusier's Nietzschean Metaphors," in *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds,"* ed. Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 311-332; Charles Jencks, *Le Corbusier and the Continual Revolution in Architecture* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2000), 354-355. For the majority of the sentences bracketed by Jeanneret in 1908 see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 174-75.

<sup>9</sup> Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 61-69. For about half of the passages bracketed by Jeanneret see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 172-73. Examples on Jeanneret's personification of the lonely man searching for "the truth" in "heures fécondes de solitude" are abundant. See, for instance, Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 22 November 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 183; Jeanneret to parents, 21 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:191.

<sup>10</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 14 June 1909; Albert Jeanneret to parent, 9 August 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:271, 279.

<sup>11</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 20 April, 2 June 1908, 26 February and 23 May 1909, repr. in *ibid.*, 1:174, 184-85, 238-41, 253,

From his correspondence we also learn that he used to go to St. Cloud to paint; that he remained faithful to Italian painting, Ruskin, Blanc and Schuré; that his favorite French artists were Puvis de Chavannes and Rodin; that, although with less intensity, he still devoted a significant part of his free time to philharmonic concerts and opera, listening to the work of Wagner, Bach and Schumann. In this respect, Beethoven was the major discovery.<sup>12</sup>

The focus on Oriental, primitive cultures and on Gothic architecture, on the one hand, and the interest in Nietzsche and Renan on the other, provide evidence that Jeanneret's Parisian activity was framed by, and interpreted within, his earlier idealist criteria, expanding the set of concerns he had already established, many of them influenced by Schuré. It seems therefore appropriate to scrutinize how Jeanneret incorporated the French Rationalist discourse in this idealist background. I will do this by focusing on three distinct though interconnected dualities. The first is the duality between Rationalist and Romantic interpretations of the Gothic. The second is the duality between Gothic and Classical design which informed Perret's work. For Jeanneret, Perret's synthesis of the organic rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc and the precepts of the Beaux-Arts—which Perret had inherited from Guadet—meant a first, though veiled, contact with Beaux-Arts classicism and a first cosmopolitan consideration of the modern city as well. The third duality is, in a sense, the result of Jeanneret's contact with the other two. It concerns the duality involved in Jeanneret's approach to the classicism of Versailles through Romantic aesthetic categories.

268. These terms are closely associated to the modification of his beliefs and religious faith, about which his father wrote in January 1909, as already mentioned. The fracas had started in the first Parisian months. His parents had expressed their concerns with the transformation in Jeanneret's mentality caused by his readings. Jeanneret reacted in a letter which illuminates the influence of those books (by "les grands Initiés," as he put it) on his changing attitude towards religion, humanity and the world in general. See Jeanneret to parents, 21 July, 29 September 1908, repr. in *ibid.*, 1:204, 215-223.

12 See Jeanneret to parents, 2 June and 29 September 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:187, 212.

All this activity and preferences are broadly summarized in one of Jeanneret's letters: "Comme ressources éducatives: le Louvre, inépuisable dans tous les domaines, - Cluny (Moyen Âge). Le musée des moulages du Trocadéro, colossale collection des moulages des plus admirables choses gothiques, grecques, italiennes, indoues, avec d'immenses morceaux d'architecture. - Le Luxembourg, collection des chefs-d'œuvre modernes, Rodin, Besnard, Puvis, Moreau, Bourdelle etc. etc. Le Panthéon, avec les fresques hors pair de Puvis de Chavannes ; le musée des Arts décoratifs etc. ; puis Notre-Dame (révélation d'un gothique grandiose, le plus beau je pense), la Sainte-Chapelle (bijou incomparable, toute de verrières, d'émaux et de sculptures polychromes). Quantité d'églises (St-Germain-des-Prés, St-Séverin, St-Étienne, etc.), des tours - tout cela d'un gothique plus pur l'un que l'autre, tout à fait nouveau pour moi et qui laisse bien loin le gothique allemand, qui ne sont en somme que des applications bâtarde faites dans un pays et par des gens qui ne l'avaient pas créé. Puis la vue sur la Seine, qui développe tout un côté d'observations, puis dans un autre domaine la tour Eiffel, le métro, puis la bibliothèque S<sup>te</sup> Geneviève, où l'on peut aller travailler n'importe quel sujet. Également aussi la bibliothèque de l'École des beaux-arts, et les cours oraux donnés par les profs les plus attirés et auxquels il est permis d'assister. J'ai commencé celui de géométrie descriptive, et arrêté par les vacances de Pâques, je reprendrai ceux de stéréotomie, de construction, d'Histoire de l'Archi., Théorie de l'Architecture. Ces cours me prendront une heure tous les jours, c'est-à-dire me flamberont tous mes matins. - L'après-midi je le passerai dans un bureau." [emphasis by Jeanneret] Jeanneret to parents, 20 April 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:171.

### GOTHIC, ROMANTICISM AND RATIONALISM: VIOLLET-LE-DUC, CORROYER, AND NOTRE-DAME

Jeanneret's predilection for Gothic architecture lasted the entire Parisian stay. His obsession for Notre-Dame has been explained by Brooks: Jeanneret was seeking to learn how art forms embody an idea, endeavoring to deduce from medieval art how to apply a controlling idea to modern architecture. This assertion is based on the sketches and annotations about the Gothic cathedral, filling about twenty pages of an extant sketchbook in which Jeanneret reveals his search for a "subjective impression rendered by the idea." Its sketches, Brooks adds, show not the concern with structural problems but with visual effects and decoration: the analysis of the different stained-glass windows, the way through which the glass-filtered light animates the masonry, or how column clusters are set against the piers. At the same time, Brooks recalls Jeanneret's letter to L'Eplattenier, where he states that Notre-Dame serves as his laboratory for the reading of Viollet-le-Duc, whom he praises for his logical and precise observations. To explain the paradox, Brooks takes his cue from Turner: although Jeanneret was interested in rationalism, its principles seem to have been grafted onto, or laid over, his idealism.<sup>13</sup>

But if indeed, through Schuré, Jeanneret was searching for a synthesis of spirit and matter, he could look at the rationalist discourse on the Gothic in light of Schuré's assertions on the Egyptian pyramid: an expression of the Absolute combining science and religion within the perfectly built form. If this is so, the insight into medieval structure of Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire* and Jeanneret's interest for visual effects and decoration must be seen as complementary rather than opposite concerns—a synthesis in which rationalism is an objective means to attain a given "subjective impression." And we might expect this "subjective impression" to concern a fundamental experience. Notre-Dame provided the paradigmatic Parisian laboratory to understand this synthesis for, as Schuré had written, Gothic architecture expressed the last attempt to re-establish a Universal religion. Hence, the word "antique" to characterize Notre-Dame.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 171-172; Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 51; Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 3 July 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 171. The sketchbook, hereafter cited as *Notre-Dame Carnet*, belongs to a private collection and there is no copy at the Fondation Le Corbusier. For its content I rely on Brooks and on the several quotations in Anne Prache, "Le Corbusiers Begegnung mit Notre-Dame in Paris," in *Bau-und Bildkunst im Spiegel internationaler Forschung, Festschrift zum 80 Geburtstag von Prof.-Dr. Edgar Lehmann* (Berlin: VEB Verlag für Bauwesen, 1989), 276-279.

<sup>14</sup> Jeanneret's letter reads: "D'autre part à côté de l'abstraction des mathématiques pures, je lis Viollet-le-Duc, cet homme si sage, si logique, si claire et si précis dans ses observations. J'ai Viollet-le-Duc et j'ai Notre-Dame qui me sert de table de laboratoire pour ainsi dire. Dans cette merveilleuse bâtisse je contrôle les dires de V. le Duc, et j'y fais mes petites observations personnelles. C'est là aussi que je vais faire mes séances de dessin 'd'après l'antique' (!) ..." Jeanneret



A larger consequence of this discussion is that, if we are to look at Le Corbusier's discourse on technique of the 1920s as a means to a meaningful architectural experience, we find its roots in this early Parisian stay. What interests us, then, is to understand how the French discourse on the Gothic expanded Schuré's idealism, on the one hand, and helped Jeanneret to move towards a more specifically architectural approach on the other.

Discussion of how the discourse on the Gothic consolidated and expanded Jeanneret's idealism must begin by noting that the antagonism between the esoteric discourse of Schuré and Viollet-le-Duc's endeavor to present Gothic architecture in scientific and rationalist terms is only apparent. They are two sides of the same coin. This is first revealed by their common historical view. Rooted in nineteenth-century positivism, Schuré's evolutionist conception of history is fundamentally the same found in the rationalist framework of architectural history; and similarly to Schuré, Viollet-le-Duc—also anti-clerical—focused on a new emerging era whose architectural conception should derive from the architecture of the past.<sup>15</sup>

In the entry "Architecture," in the *Dictionnaire*, Viollet-le-Duc traces the evolutionary process of French architecture from antiquity to sixteenth-century France.<sup>16</sup> While attributing the origins of church architecture to the pagan basilica, Viollet-le-Duc focuses on the process through which France created the Romanesque by absorbing influences from the East, and how, freed from the church, and influenced again from the Orient, it created the Gothic cathedral. The first major impulse to the architecture of the Middle Ages in France, he says, extends back to the eighth century, when Charlemagne tried to launch a *renaissance* by retrieving the ancient arts and sciences through the Oriental cultures of Byzantium, Syria and the Spanish Moors. Seeking to connect with the Roman inheritance embedded in the ancient architecture of the French territory, the work of the artists and men of science that Charlemagne brought from those regions gave birth to Romanesque architecture. The new style thus adapted a secular inheritance to the Christian cult. In the period that followed Charlemagne, Romanesque architecture progressively came under the influence of the church. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries it lacked the necessary unity to become the art of the

...  
to L'Eplattenier, 3 July 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 171.

<sup>15</sup> As Summerson has noted, in contrast with his English contemporaries, such as Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc dismissed any question of revival, rather aiming at the creation of a modern parallel. "The modern architect, says Viollet-le-Duc, must analyze the masterpieces of the past, reduce them to a process of argument, then apply the argument to his own problems." Summerson, "Viollet-le-Duc and the Rational Point of View," chap. 6 in his *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963), 141, 146.

<sup>16</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, vol 1, (Paris: A. Morel & Cie, 1875), 116-452. All subsequent citations refer to this edition. The entry, with more than three hundred pages, is divided into several parts, treating (1) a brief history of the origins of the architecture of the Middle Ages in France, (2) its development between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, (3) religious architecture, (4) monastic architecture, (5) civil architecture and (6) military architecture.

nation. Step by step, this unity was gained by the end of the twelfth century with the growing influence of the monarchy and the renewed influence of the Orient brought by the crusades. Romanesque architecture succumbed to the progress of secular artists and men of science, and France gave rise to a new architectural system completely freed from the Roman tradition—the twelfth and thirteenth century Gothic cathedrals.

The affinities with Schuré need hardly be mentioned, from the Oriental roots of western architecture to the lay origins of the Gothic cathedral. This ultimately explains the rationalist quality of the Gothic. In contrast with the Renaissance, which Viollet-le-Duc sees as the appropriation of appearances from antiquity, the Gothic was permeated by the *spirit* of antiquity, which endowed the Gothic with the Greek rational representation of construction, clarity of expression and honest use of materials. The opposition between the classicism of antiquity and the Gothic was therefore a sterile one. Their differences were the result of two different civilizations with distinct points of departure. While the Gothic was the expression of the French nation, it ultimately constituted an adaptation of pagan architecture to Christian values. Just as the French nation had built the expression of its soul upon a rationalist approach to the architecture of antiquity, so should our new emerging era. In so doing, it would express the new modern soul, fulfilling Viollet-le-Duc's belief in architecture as the living expression of the spirit of the people.<sup>17</sup>

A second affinity with Schuré is thus found in the idealist beliefs of Viollet-le-Duc, for whom rationalism was only the means to achieve something superior, that is, artistic expression. In his view, style is a spiritual conception, a manifestation of an ideal founded on a principle: “Nous ne parlerons donc que du style qui appartient à l'art considéré comme conception de l'esprit ... Qu'est-ce donc que le style? C'est, dans une œuvre d'art, la manifestation d'un idéal établi sur un principe.”<sup>18</sup> So, in grounding his view of a new architecture in the French Middle Ages, Viollet-le-Duc anchored modern western rationalism in ancient tradition, from the Greek to Roman and Byzantine periods, which he saw as rationalist architectural expressions. But underlying the rationalism of his historical approach was the search for an artistic expression of both Christian and French identities, historically based, conceived by the spirit, and capable of stirring an essential emotive response in men.

These ideas resurface in Jeanneret's correspondence. If he saw the Gothic as the architectural model for the new emerging era, he also understood it as embodying an historical inheritance extending back to the early Christian era. This explains why he compared the twentieth century both with “les Romains” (the Romanesque) and the

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1:147, 134.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 8:478.

Gothic and why architecture very much remained in the realm of an artistic non-materialist expression.<sup>19</sup> Also, this seems to explain his positing of a certain elementary or “primitive” quality of Notre-Dame, resurfacing, for instance, in Jeanneret’s attention to the elementary joint between the stained-glass and stone at Notre-Dame, where the iron frame is replaced simply by cement—an observation underlined by Jeanneret.<sup>20</sup>

This leads us to a third aspect shared by Schuré and Viollet-le-Duc: the symbolic and experiential understanding of architecture. While Schuré sees the pure geometry and rigorous construction of the ancient symbols of Egypt as the means for an epistemological experience, Viollet-le-Duc sees the Gothic as a model for a new human-centered architecture, connecting man and God and entailing the aesthetic category of the Sublime:

“Nous ne dirons pas que l’art né à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle sur une portion du sol de la France est l’*art chrétien* par excellence : Saint-Pierre de Rome, Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople, Saint-Paul hors des murs, Saint-Marc de Venise, nos églises romanes de l’Auvergne et du Poitou, sont des monuments chrétiens, puisqu’ils sont bâtis par des chrétiens pour l’usage du culte. Le christianisme est sublime dans les catacombes, dans les déserts comme à Saint-Pierre de Rome ou dans la cathédrale de Chartres. Mais nous demanderons : sans le christianisme, les monuments du nord de la France auraient-ils pu être élevés ? Évidemment non. Ce grand principe de l’unité d’échelle dont nous venons d’entretenir nos lecteurs, n’est-il pas un symbole saisissant de l’esprit chrétien ? Placer ainsi l’homme en rapport avec Dieu, même dans les temples les plus vastes et les plus magnifiques par la comparaison continue de sa petitesse avec la grandeur du monument religieux, n’est-ce pas là une idée chrétienne, celle qui frappe le plus les populations ? N’est-ce pas l’application rigoureusement suivie de cette méthode dans nos monuments qui inspire toujours ce sentiment indéfinissable de respect en face des grandes églises *gothiques* ?”<sup>21</sup>

It is in Viollet-le-Duc’s *Entretiens sur l’Architecture* (1863-72) that the Romantic nature of the experiential dimension of the Gothic is fully revealed, reflecting an

19 “Vienne ayant porté le coup de mort à ma conception purement plastique – (de la recherche *seule* des formes) – de l’architecture, – arrivé à Paris je sentis en moi un vide immense ... et j’allais consulter les vieux. Je choisis les plus enragés lutteurs, ceux auxquelles nous sommes, nous du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, prêts à être semblables: les Romains. Et pendant 3 mois j’étudiai les Romains, le soir à la Bibliothèque. Et j’allais à Notre-Dame et je suivis la fin du cours gothique de Magne – aux Beaux-Arts... et je compris ... Boeswillwald a repris un cours d’arch. Romane-gothique et là éclate ce qu’est l’architecture.” Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 22 November 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 184-185. Late in April he wrote to his parents: “Je vous dis que nous autres modernes avec notre fer et notre béton armé, nous ne sommes que des poupons en regard de ces terribles gothiques, qui, ma foi, s’ils avaient eu le temps, auraient refait la construction de la tour de Babel, et l’auraient réussi ! Je vis dans un émerveillement constant devant les merveilles qui vous crèvent les yeux à chaque pas, devant les témoins de la force de l’esprit de l’homme, quand il est alimenté par une foi vivante, brûlante, une fois en n’importe quoi, mais, au moins, une fois. Il n’y a plus que les ingénieurs et les savants qui aient foi en quelque chose aujourd’hui, c’est pourquoi ils bouleversent le monde. Mais patiente, nous sommes là, et nous allons nous unir à eux et vous verrez de grandes choses. Si cela se réalise, jamais l’esprit humain n’aura à un tel degré employé un esprit si fort et une âme si large et noble.” [emphasis by Jeanneret] Jeanneret to parents, 30 April 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:261-62.

20 Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, quoted in Prache, “Begegnung mit Notre-Dame,” 276.

21 *Ibid.*, 1:147-148.

emotional and symbolic understanding of architecture with clear affinities with the discourse on the *Gesamkunstwerk* already encountered in our earlier discussion of Schuré. In the introductory section of the first *Entretiens*, Viollet-le-Duc discusses architecture and the arts in general within the realm of sensorial responsiveness and its universal dimension. Art is an instinct and spiritual need, he posits, and the different artistic forms, acting upon the senses, produce a limited range of impressions independently of the adopted artistic language. These, in turn, evoke poetically the moral sensations associated to natural phenomena, such as the sound of the ocean and wind, the rising sun, the aspect of an abrupt place or a green plain, darkness or light. Just as the musician is capable of evoking and producing, for instance, the harmony of the waves, bringing our thoughts back to our own experience of the ocean and awakening in us the sensing of its fresh odor, so is the architect by using his own artistic language. If he traces a long horizontal line under the sky, our eyes following it without interruption will awake the sense of grandeur and serenity, bringing forth ideas similar to those stirred by the ocean.<sup>22</sup>

The aesthetic category involved in the reference to the ocean is obviously that of the Sublime. The first interesting fact is that Viollet-le-Duc establishes a link between it and the universal dimension of the emotive response to art. For Jeanneret, this would undoubtedly reinforce the idea that the search for a new architecture within the art forms of the past is simultaneously the search for a universally valid correlation between form and emotive response. And this supports the view of Notre-Dame as a laboratory to understand how to attain a fundamental experience through objective means.

This fundamental experience, inheritor of “primitive” cultures, is inscribed in the notion of *Gesamkunstwerk* and involves the dialectics of prospect (the succession of varied scenes stemming from the experience of moving through a field of columns) and expanse (the Sublime sparked by the grandeur of space). Viollet-le-Duc proceeds with the contrasting examples of the feelings prompted by a low crypt and a monument with vaults rising high aloft, filled by air and light. Whereas the low crypt stirs in our spirit sadness, oppression and dark images, the high vaults reflect majestic ideas. Such is the case of St. Peter’s in Rome:

“... tous ceux qui entrent dans la basilique de Saint-Pierre de Rome, dès le seuil, leurs regards se portent tout d’abord vers cette immense coupole qui couronne l’édifice. Les piliers de l’église sont couverts de marbre, de magnifiques tombeaux en garnissent les parois : ils ne les voient pas, mais s’avancent toujours en cherchant à pénétrer les profon-

<sup>22</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l’architecture*, vol.1 (Paris: A. Morel & C<sup>ie</sup>, 1863), 17-19. All subsequent citations refer to the Morel edition.

deurs de l'immense coupole. Il vous faut les avertir à plusieurs reprises qu'ils heurtent des sculptures, qu'ils marchent sur le porphyre, avant que leurs yeux ne se portent sur ces objets..."<sup>23</sup>

Then he explains that the universal dimension of artistic forms is best achieved in the unison of action of the theatre, gathering the various expressions of art to imprint on the crowd a "unique sentiment," a "homogeneous emotion," and a "complete, harmonious accord." Not surprisingly, the model is found in ancient Greece. But the Middle Ages had well incorporated the "intimate correlation of the arts" in their *mises en scènes*:

"Le moyen âge ignorait-il cette corrélation intime qui existe entre les diverses formes de l'art, lorsqu'il bâtit ces églises dans lesquelles la vue des cérémonies imposantes, la musique et la voix de l'orateur semblent diriger les esprits vers une même pensée ?

Si l'antiquité possédait au plus haut degré de grandeur la mise en scène des arts, le moyen âge n'était pas moins doué de cet instinct, ou de ce génie, si l'on veut ; nous aurons l'occasion de le démontrer.

Ainsi donc, au point de vue philosophique, il n'y a que l'art, l'art unique, prenant diverses formes pour agir sur l'esprit de l'homme."<sup>24</sup>

If in St. Peter's the idea is put in terms of prospect and grandeur, the example illustrating the medieval *mise en scène* is far more complex: the account of an episode of his childhood in Notre-Dame, fusing architecture, light and music:

"Il m'est resté le souvenir d'une émotion d'enfant très-vive et encore fraîche aujourd'hui dans mon esprit ... La cathédrale était tendue de noir. Mes regards se fixèrent sur les vitraux de la rose méridionale à travers laquelle passaient les rayons du soleil, colorés des nuances les plus éclatantes ... Tout à coup les grandes orgues se firent entendre ; pour moi, c'était la rose que j'avais devant les yeux, qui chantait... sous cette impression de plus en plus vive, puisque j'en venais, dans mon imagination, à croire que tels panneaux de vitraux produisaient des sons graves, tels autres des sons aigus, je fus saisi d'un si belle terreur qu'il fallut me faire sortir. Ce n'est donc pas l'éducation qui établi en nous ces rapports intimes entre les diverses expressions de l'art."<sup>25</sup>

This account about the powerful emotion sparked by the Gothic cathedral, involving the light, space and music, brings the aesthetic experience of the Gothic into the realm of Schuré's life entirety, that is, of the discourse on the *Gesamkunstwerk*. Embodied in it is also the sense of loss of self, or the sense of spiritual transport: the child

23 Ibid., 1:20.

24 Ibid., 1:21-22.

25 Ibid., 1:22.



felt that he had to choose between running away or letting the unison of light, music and space transport him to an unknown place.<sup>26</sup>

If Jeanneret did read the *Entretiens*, which is more than likely, he could easily establish a connection between this episode and the masses that he had witnessed in St. Mark's, or the phenomena of epiphany widely mentioned by Schuré.<sup>27</sup> But even if he didn't, the link between the Gothic, the bodily sense of space stemming from moving through a field of columns, and the sense of spiritual transport stirred by the grandeur of space reached Jeanneret from other sources. This is the case of Huysmans's *La Cathédrale* or, at a broader level, of the French cult of Wagnerism and the *Gesamtkunstwerk* debate associated with it, to mention but two examples.

In *La Cathédrale*, Huysmans's association between moving through the axial columnar space of Gothic church and the analogy of the sacred forest is direct: "Il est presque certain que l'allée des forêts sert de point de départ aux rues mystiques de nos nefs." Also, the idea of spiritual transport is explicitly related to the effects of light in longitudinal and vertical terms. He speaks of the dimness of the parvis gradually attenuated along the nave until the space below the dome or along the vertical development of the nave, establishing an allegory of the ascension of the soul. The idea of spiritual transport is further explored in symbolic terms, relating to the Gothic filial relationship with the Orient, to the expression of a pagan existence, or to the *mise en scène*. Arguing that in the Middle Ages everything on earth is sign, Huysmans writes about the ritual, its liturgy and Gregorian chants, and he even speculates on a religious dance inherited from antiquity which was part of the primitive ceremonies of Christianity, reinforcing the idea of architecture as a privileged scenario of a life entirety involving religion and art in a single aesthetic experience. In short, Huysmans sums up a key view of the French discourse on the Gothic: the history of architecture of the Middle Ages is not the history of the architects' effort to solve the construction of the vaults, but the search for the soul of Catholicism—a view that, through Schuré and Viollet-le-Duc, Jeanneret could well endorse.<sup>28</sup>

The second case is the Wagnerian discourse. A major source through which it reached Jeanneret were Rolland's writings and course at the Sorbonne, which prob-

<sup>26</sup> In this description, the notion of spiritual transport is associated to the sense of loss of self, in which we may find a resonance of Burke's connection between the notions of Sublime and terror, such as he treated it in his *Philosophical Inquiry* (1757).

<sup>27</sup> A handwritten list of courses and books in the verso of a sketchbook sheet mentions Viollet-le-Duc's *Entretiens*, suggesting that Jeanneret read it, perhaps during the three months he dived into the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. The list is mentioned in Sekler, *Early Drawings*, 479.

<sup>28</sup> Joris-Karl Huysmans, *La Cathédrale* (Paris: P.-V. Stock, 1898), 35, 162, 166-69, 473-76. The book is a novel which discusses the symbolism and iconography of medieval art and architecture from the religious viewpoint of Catholicism. Jeanneret bought it in December 1909. Based on Jeanneret's annotations, Turner has noted that he read this book very carefully. Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 208n64.

ably explain Jeanneret's new praise for Beethoven. Wagner thought of the music of Beethoven (and Rolland subscribed) as the embodiment and expression of the progression of civilization, as he argues in his book about Beethoven, where he retakes two Schopenhauerian key issues. One is the discourse on the abstract nature of music, through which both Schopenhauer and Wagner ascribe to music the power of "redeeming from the curse of Appearance" and of translating "an Idea of the World" into abstract concepts. Music, Wagner concludes, can thus "once and for all be judged by nothing but the category of the *sublime*"; it "transports us to the highest ecstasy of consciousness of our infinitude," sparking "our unity with Nature." The second issue, deriving from the former, is the assumption that the non-visual art of music approximates plastic representation through rhythmic sequences. In this respect, Wagner holds that rhythmic structure brings music into comparison with architecture, making it "so much a matter of superficialities ... as to expose her to the said false judgment by analogy with Plastic art." Musical rhythm is thus comparable to the sense-impression of color and light modulation, to the "columnar ordering of rhythmic parts," symmetry and regularity, or to the human gesture in dance. Rhythm makes itself intelligible through an expressive regularity of motion in space. And it is when rhythm becomes almost as timeless as it is spaceless, that music provides us with a spiritual revelation and "brings to our consciousness the inmost essence of Religion free from all dogmatic fictions."<sup>29</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the comparison between visual arts and music had become commonplace, reinforcing the importance of rhythm in the aesthetic experience. Echoes of the theories on the abstract nature of music had reached Jeanneret at an early phase through books such as Blanc's *Grammaire*. And in Rolland's *Vie de Beethoven*, Jeanneret could also read about Wagner and rhythm, while Rolland's Wagnerian leanings certainly furthered this debate. Through Viollet-le-Duc and Wagner, Jeanneret could see the columnar rhythm of the Gothic and the effect of light modulation upon its surfaces, all made intelligible through bodily motion, as something capable of sparking an almost timeless and spaceless sense of spiritual transport. Incidentally, when commenting on the Parisian concerts he had attended, Jeanneret wrote about music as something capable of "transporting us to higher spheres" (nous transporterent en des sphères supérieures), while seeing the Gothic as the expression of a "religion d'expansion."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See Wagner, "Beethoven" (1870), in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, William Ashton Ellis trans., vol. 5 *Actors and Singers* (New York: Broude Brothers, 1966), 60-80. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.

<sup>30</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 2 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:186; Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 22 November 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 186. The correlation between art forms is present in some of Jeanneret's contemporary comments. Such is the case of his characterization of Beethoven's work, in which the emotions stirred by music are

Viollet-le-Duc and the Rationalism of the French discourse on the Gothic, then, were quite compatible with, and complementary to, the idealism of Schuré. All share several key aspects: a view of the evolutionary historical development which, being rooted in the Orient, must be accomplished by the modern era; an idealist view in which rationalism is a means to achieve something deeper; and an experiential and symbolic understanding of architecture. And this seems to have been accommodated upon the larger debate on the *Gesamkunstwerk*.

It was these affinities and broader philosophical context that provided the basis for Jeanneret's interpretation of Notre-Dame. Based on Jeanneret's sketchbook annotations, Anne Prache has noted that Jeanneret was sensitive to the environment of the cathedral and to the prospect it offers.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, some of these annotations reveal that, for Jeanneret, Gothic architecture was about experiencing the whole-space, so to speak—and that the whole remained associated to the experiences of prospect (the bodily sense of columnar space) and expanse (the sense of spiritual transport). On the side aisles he writes that the double row of arches and the two parallel planes formed by the column shafts provide a moving effect (*effet mouvant*) and create an attractive interplay of light and shadow, giving the illusion of the forest; the sight changes with each change of location, he notes, the columns resonating with tree trunks and the light resembling the varied play of light on the leaves and moss. As for the overall impression, what truly strikes him is the illusion created by the dim glass-filtered light (a *force of living nature*) upon matter. This means a focus on space; hence, the expression *volume orné* when writing about the south transept, which he much praised because of the south window, much more powerful than the one on the north. More than that, it means a focus on the emotional experience of space. He writes that the stained-glass windows pierced into the austere stone don't draw attention to themselves, rather creating illusion through light effects that combine materials in an invisible manner, their vivid, warm color caressing the stone mass and giving it life and meaning—an internal *raison d'être*. Bringing to mind the account of Viollet-le-Duc's childhood, he adds that the church windows, *silently singing*, make the color of stone vibrate intensely *reaching paroxysm*.<sup>32</sup>

That he saw this emotional experience of space as a product of reason is confirmed also by his notes: this paroxysm, he writes, can be translated into mathematics

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...

equivalent to those stirred by sculpture and architecture. For Jeanneret, his music is "le sourire sacré, ineffablement vivace des plus belles œuvres de la statuaire grecque, des plus radieuses manifestations architecturales ..." The same can be argued as to the idea of a synthesis of art and life in Jeanneret's claim for a "retour à la musicalité" and in his assertions that "le concerto, est en principe la négation de la musique." Jeanneret to parents, 2 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:187, 259).

31 Prache, "Begegnung mit Notre-Dame," 276.

32 Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, 14, 16, 18, quoted in *ibid.*, 277-279.

as the “common measure and means; a point at which materials are linked to each other in an invisible way.”<sup>33</sup> This passage echoes Provensal’s *idea*, which consists of a synthesis of science and art through mathematical rapports, and its links with mystical numerology: art manifests the divine through universal laws of unity, number and harmony, appealing to both physical senses and mind.<sup>34</sup> But it is also a symptom of Jeanneret’s approach to Notre-Dame in more specific architectural terms, explicit in a concluding note summarizing his insight into the Gothic cathedral as the consideration of what is stone, of how surfaces must be enhanced and of the relative position in which they should be arranged, as well as the consideration of what is a window of a church, the life it holds, and the link it establishes with the stone in order to join the whole in an ideal way.<sup>35</sup>

Jeanneret was therefore first and foremost focused on the objective means to a subjective experience of space, associated to the experiences of prospect and expanse, and activated by the effects of light upon surfaces and matter. He could think of it in the light of Provensal’s “idea”; and he could recognize in it his early experiences of, say, the cathedral of Milan, where he had noted the analogy of the forest, the narrative of unfolding *tableaux* associated with it, and the experience of the Sublime sparked by the grandeur of the interior: “*Là quelle grandeur ! (mystère de la forêt).*” But now he could also look at the experiences of prospect and expanse of the Gothic in light of Schuré’s imagery of sacred forests and ceremonies of revelation of ancient religions, and see the Gothic as an embodiment of a “primitive,” fundamental experience through reason.

We should now turn to another aspect of the discourse on the Gothic absorbed by Jeanneret in Paris: the typological aspect. Used to describe the historical evolution of the Christian church, type was discussed in terms of an assemblage of architectural elements with simple forms.

The association between the evolutionary historical view and the notion of type is provided by the section on religious architecture of the entry “Architecture,” in Viollet-le-Duc’s *Dictionnaire*, dealing with the typological development of the medieval

<sup>33</sup> Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, 14, quoted in *ibid.*, 277.

<sup>34</sup> Jeanneret was also aware of these esoteric theories about fusing spirit and matter through mystic numerology through authors like Schuré or Huysmans, who attributes a major role to the symbol or “Science symbolique,” seeing it as a divine source. This includes the “science allégorique des nombres.” The Middle Ages, the epoch in which, according to Huysmans, men lived closer to God, followed the tradition revealed by Christ and expressed it through a symbolic idiom. Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, 119-121, 127-129, *passim*. For Provensal and Schuré see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 12-27, who has pointed out the consequences of these discourses in Le Corbusier “tracés régulateurs” or the Modulor system.

<sup>35</sup> Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, 18, quoted in Prache, “Begegnung mit Notre-Dame,” 278-279

Christian church.<sup>36</sup> This is also the theme of Corroyer's *L'Architecture romane*, which, judging by the sketches and annotations in two sketchbooks, Jeanneret carefully studied at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (note that the word "Romane" means Romanesque in French, whereas the word for ancient Roman would be "Romaine").<sup>37</sup>

Corroyer's preface shows the extent to which his work is framed by nineteenth-century Gothic enthusiasm and by the studies on medieval architecture in France, mainly borrowing from Viollet-le-Duc—whom he praises for the clarity of his "psychological study" of the building systems of western architecture—and the archeologist Jules Quicherat. The book is divided in two parts, the first devoted to the historical development which would lead to Romanesque architecture, and the second to the study of the Romanesque, based in large part on the analysis of French buildings. A second volume was devoted to the Gothic, the ultimate aim of Corroyer's research: like Viollet-le-Duc, he considered the Gothic a French national icon.

Presented as a complex answer to the new functional needs of Christian ritual, the typological development analyzed by Viollet-le-Duc and Corroyer is focused on the technical solutions and principles which characterize the distinct typologies of the Christian church. The historical account ranges from the early catholic appropriations of the Roman basilica to Romanesque architecture, broadly following a historical sequence shared by Viollet-le-Duc and established since more than a century in Julien-David Leroy's *Histoire de la disposition des formes différentes que les chrétiens ont données à leurs temples depuis Constantin le Grand jusqu'à nous* (Paris, 1764).<sup>38</sup>

In this historical process, the Gothic church is presented as a result of a typological development reconciling the longitudinal and centralized plans of earlier schemes. Viollet-le-Duc presents three main Oriental typologies that, much by influence of the first crusades, informed western architecture (fig. 95): the oldest is the circular plan, the best known example of which is the Saint-Sepulchre in Jerusalem; the second derives from the ancient basilica, adding a transept with apses to the rectangular plan, as in the church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem; the third is the truly Byzantine type, composed of a central dome with four openings in the four cardinal directions, peripheral vaults, one or three apses on the east and a narthex on the entrance side. Viollet-le-Duc cites the Hagia Sophia and the Saints Sergius and Bacchus churches in Constanti-

<sup>36</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, 1:166-241.

<sup>37</sup> Edouard Corroyer, *L'Architecture romane* (Paris: Quantin, 1888) is the first of two volumes devoted to Romanesque and Gothic architecture in France respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Continuing a discourse which started with the Abbé Jean-Louis de Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic ideal, Leroy traces the gradual unfolding process of architecture that had led to Christian church, from the Roman basilica to Hagia Sophia, St. Mark in Venice, or St. Peter in Rome. See Etlin, "The Neoclassical Interlude," chap. 4 in *Symbolic Space*, 88-123; R.D. Middleton, "The Abbé de Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic Ideal: A Prelude to Romantic Classicism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 25, no. 3-4 (Jul.-Dec., 1962), 290.



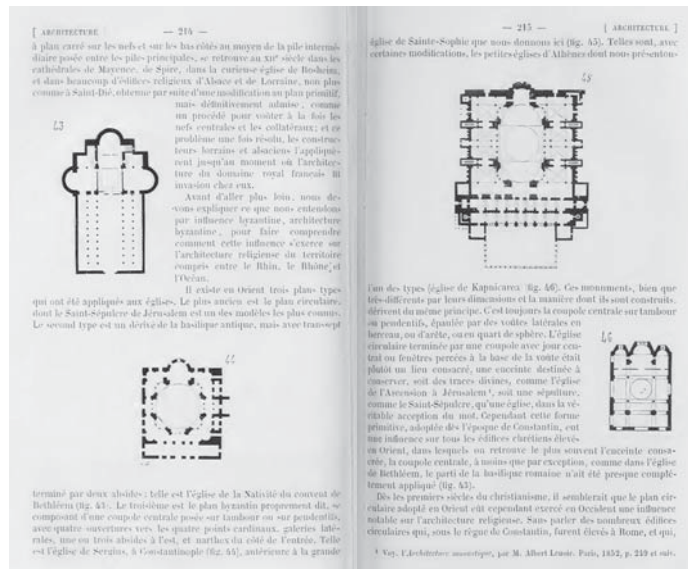


FIG. 95 Viollet-le-Duc. Pages from *Dictionnaire*. Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem; church of Saint Sergius and Bacchus, Istanbul; Hagia Sophia, Istanbul; church of Kapnikarea, Athens.

nople, as well as the small Athenian churches.<sup>39</sup>

Jeanneret's interest in the historical process of development as a way to understand Gothic architecture is revealed by his correspondence.<sup>40</sup> But it is in his sketchbooks, where he summarizes the main historical steps treated by Corroyer, that Jeanneret's attention to the gradual typological evolution becomes clearer. Corroyer follows Viollet-le-Duc, discussing the influence that the Orient exerted over the initial longitudinal space in the early appropriations of pagan buildings, first from Syria and then from Byzantine Constantinople. The examples are essentially the same as Viollet-le-Duc's. The idea that, in functional and spatial terms, the crux of the problem is the tension between longitudinal and centralized plans emerges in Corroyer's assumption that Romanesque architecture emerges directly from Byzantine and Roman architecture—a statement copied by Jeanneret in his sketchbook<sup>41</sup>—having undergone a process of hesitation between a longitudinal development of space and a centralized plan, ultimately leading to their reconciliation in the cross plan with a dome of the Gothic church. In compositional and technical terms, Corroyer emphasizes the association between typological definition and building system, discussing it as a set of distinct ways of assembling structural elements with simple geometric forms, from domes to columns or arches. To each combination corresponds a different spatial and formal result.

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39 Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, 1: 214-15.

40 "Ayant fini l'étude du style roman et ayant bien compris toutes les phases de son développement, je poursuis par l'étude du gothique et, parallèlement à l'étude des livres, je fais l'étude pratique en passant des heures précieuses sur Notre-Dame, le chef-d'œuvre incontestable et le monument unique de l'art pendant vingt siècles." Jeanneret to parents, 14 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:188.

41 Corroyer, *L'Architecture romane*, 156; Jeanneret, *Carnet A2-19-108*, 47-48.



columnar shafts. While arguing that the double arcade is a role model from the structural point of view, he sees the column clusters as a way to contrast concave and convex forms.<sup>43</sup> This attention to form emerges also in the letter in which Jeanneret states that Notre-Dame was his laboratory for the reading of Viollet-le-Duc. Here, we can see that the endeavor of his “séances de dessin” in the Gothic cathedral entailed attention to the play of simple forms animated by the effects of light and shadow:

“... je suis épouvanté de constater chaque jour mon incapacité à tenir un crayon ; je ne sens pas la forme je ne puis faire tourner une forme ... je recherche géométriquement le principe du modelé, la décomposition de la lumière et de l'ombre sur une sphère, un ovale, un vase ou d'autres objets ... Si on nous avait appris seulement cela : qu'une académie c'est un assemblage de formes géométriques ; que ces formes admettent telle ombre et telle lumière, et seulement cette ombre-là et cette lumière-là. Si on avait fait agir en nous la raison, la logique, l'esprit de déduction ...”<sup>44</sup>

This passage in Jeanneret's letter, as well as his careful reading of Corroyer, suggest that Jeanneret was developing a new sensitivity to the simple forms of architectural elements, to their arrangement, and to the effect of light on them.

As for his view of Notre-Dame as a typology accomplished by *la raison, la logique, l'esprit de déduction*, one must return to the typological development of the Christian church. Put simply, the typology of Notre-Dame—a tall nave flanked by low aisles, triforium and clerestory above—is presented by Viollet-le-Duc as the result of a crucial step in the development of the Romanesque: the introduction of buttresses, allowing for the reconciliation of the symbolic vertical development of the nave and the introduction of clerestory windows at the upper level lighting the tall nave above. Through this argument—retaken by Corroyer and transcribed in Jeanneret's sketchbook<sup>45</sup>—Jeanneret could interpret Notre-Dame as the result of a rationalist improvement in order to introduce light through which to animate the forms of the architectural elements, emphasize the vertical expanse of space, and thus trigger the emotional power of the Gothic. This is suggested by Jeanneret's notes about the experience of prospect and light effects on the columnar space of Notre-Dame, which he relates to the *constructive boldness* of the two-level column shafts<sup>46</sup>; and it also reminds us of Huysmans's association between the vertical decrease of the nave's dimness and the notion of spiritual transport.

These notions seem to emerge in a watercolor of the cathedral of Oran, Algeria,

43 Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, 18, quoted in Prache, “Begegnung mit Notre-Dame,” 278-279.

44 Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 3 July 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 171-72.

45 Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, 1:187-196; Corroyer, *L'Architecture romane*, 222-223; Jeanneret, *Carnet A2-19-108*, 47-49.

46 See Jeanneret, *Notre-Dame Carnet*, quoted in Prache, “Begegnung mit Notre-Dame,” 278.

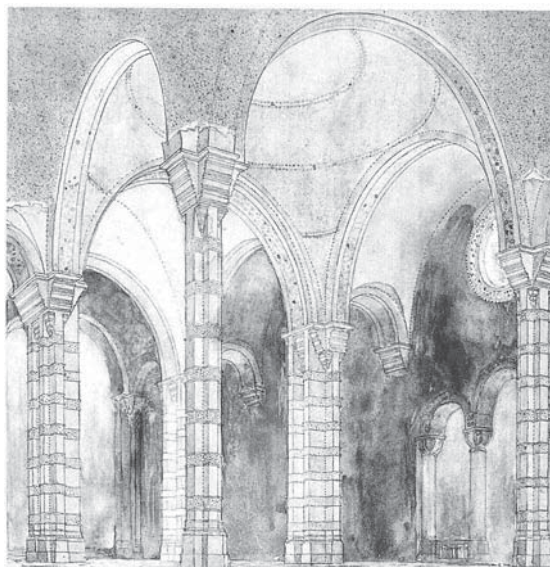


FIG. 97 Cathedral of Oran. Watercolor, probably by Jeanneret.

belonging to the Perret brother's archive, and seemingly painted by Jeanneret (fig. 97).<sup>47</sup> In contrast with his watercolors of Santa Croce or the cathedral of Siena (fig 74, 75), the composition portrays the ground and the simple forms of the domes, emphasizing the assemblage of forms, the slender verticality of the columns and the grandeur of space—achieved by reinforced concrete. The chiaroscuro puts the emphasis on the central lit dome articulating the apse and side chapel, revealing the typological axial system. Suggesting spatial expansion towards the vertical and longitudinal directions, prompted by light effects, the viewpoint still frames the space obliquely conveying prospect. Even if it was not drawn by Jeanneret, this watercolor seems to indicate that these themes were a subject of discussion in the Perret office, and that the analogy of the forest in his early work and the fascination with Santa Croce were now redirected towards a specific aesthetic experience promoted by the French Gothic revival.

Viollet-le-Duc and Corroyer thus meant a decisive step in a process which had started at Santa Croce. The pair prospect and expanse was now being reformulated in terms of typology and of the assembling of simple forms through reason. The rationalist discourse on the Gothic thus seems to have been seen by Jeanneret as an objective typological search—an architectural system conceived by reason—the ultimate aim of which was to recover a fundamental emotional experience by means of a universally valid correlation between form (type) and emotive response.

<sup>47</sup> Designed by the architect Albert Ballu, the project for the cathedral of Oran was engineered by the Perret brothers, with Jeanneret as a draftsman. Le Corbusier, "Perret," 7; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 160. Pointing out the similarities with Jeanneret's watercolor of the cathedral of Siena, Fanelli and Gargiani have suggested that the watercolor of the cathedral of Oran was painted by Jeanneret. Fanelli and Gargiani, *Confronti*, 12.



## ORGANIC RATIONALISM, BEAUX-ARTS, AND THE CITY: THE WORK WITH PERRET

The second duality which I would like to address is that of Gothic and Classic design which informs Perret's work, a synthesis of the organic rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc and the precepts of the Beaux-Arts which Perret inherited from Guadet. For Jeanneret, this meant a first contact with Beaux-Arts classicism and the conceptual argument of *la marche*. For him, this had two main consequences. On one level, the experiential dimension of architecture was freed from the analogy with nature to be put in terms of sequential spaces; it was through the fundamental structure of prospect and expanse that Jeanneret could establish a more abstract link with it. On another level, Perret's apartment houses provided Jeanneret with the transposition of this fundamental structure to the vertical development of architecture, inscribing it in a new relationship with the city.

As an architect, Perret owes much to three main vectors, the organic rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc, the new building system of reinforced concrete, and the classicist education which he received from the Beaux-Arts. But the main contribution of Perret to Jeanneret seems to have been the classicist conceptual argument of *la marche*. The role of *la marche* in shaping Le Corbusier's concept of the architectural promenade at this early stage has not been accounted for. Scholars have rather focused on the affinities between his early education and theories such as those of Choisy and the Greek picturesque. But although Jeanneret remained aloof from French academic doctrine, the influence of the conceptual argument of *la marche* cannot be completely ignored in the process of formalization of Le Corbusier's architectural promenade.

The nineteenth-century term used to discuss Beaux-Arts composition was *la marche*, which meant to walk through (*se déplacer en marchant*). *La marche* "was commonly used to denote the sequence of images in a poem or of action in a novel, the progress of a piece of music or of the moves in a game of chess"; it had also a specific use in painting to refer to the pictorial order in which the various figures, groups, masses and sequence of planes are presented. In architecture, *la marche* was used in the Beaux-Arts evaluation of Grand Prix designs to refer to the space experience of the user as he walked through the building. Several nineteenth-century graphic procedures were used in order to both construct the experience of human movement during the design process and to emphasize it in plan drawings, so that the project could be evaluated from the point of view of the spectator as he moves through the sequential unfolding spaces. The marking of the main axes of circulation with lines is an exam-



ple.<sup>48</sup>

This approach to architectural composition entails not only the emphasis on space experience but also a conception from the inside out, much as it happens in nineteenth-century English picturesque design—a principle which is not alien to the Villa Fallet and the analogy of the tree underlying it. But whereas the English design developed organically, the French formal and monumental focus related to social rituals of a ceremonial nature.<sup>49</sup> A paradigmatic example is the *Opéra* in Paris, by Charles Garnier. In *Le Théâtre* (1871), Garnier explained that the architectural conception of a theatre should take into account the fact that it had to be crossed (*parcouru*), pointing out a sequence of four *tableaux* at the Opéra: the approach to the building, the gathering in the foyer, the ascent towards the place, and the contemplation of the scene: “... il faut étudier de quelle façon se fait la promenade.”<sup>50</sup> The exterior, in turn, resulted from and expressed the internal *distribution* of the main elements.

The main model underlying Jeanneret’s acquaintance with this legacy through Perret was the French *hôtel particulier* type.<sup>51</sup> Extending back to the sixteenth century, the influence of the French *hôtel* reached into the twentieth century, having codified the private dwelling as a type in France. The evolution of the type entails a progressive independence from the constraints of the urban fabric: this led to a gradual emphasis on regularity and bilateral symmetry, exploring an appropriate expressive character endowed by the classical orders. Etlin has noted that the prescribed uniformity of the compositional and proportional system of the façades, informed by the classical codes, became independent from the inner arrangement of spaces which, in contrast, was grounded on a principle of assembled rooms differing in dimension, location, character and ornament according to each function. In the eighteenth century, the functional relationship between the different rooms displayed by *la distribution* followed the for-

48 On the broader use of the term “marche” and the Beaux-Arts concept associated with it see David van Zanten, “Architectural Composition at the École des Beaux-Arts from Charles Percier to Charles Garnier,” in Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts*, 2nd ed. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1984), 152. Van Zanten has clarified the conceptual differences between *parti* and *marche*: “*Marche* did not mean the abstract layout of the plan, for which the Section d’Architecture used the term *parti*. Like *marche*, *parti* was derived from a common phrase, *prendre parti* (to take a stand). When applied to architectural composition, *parti* designated the conceptual disposition of parts decided upon by the designer at the outset ... The *parti* pertained to the architect, the *marche* to his design. Thus, the Section d’Architecture could note, on the one hand, the ‘originality’ of a competitor’s *parti* and, on the other, the ‘grandeur’ and ‘simplicity’ of his project’s *marche*.” (Ibid., 185). For the graphic procedures used to emphasize *la marche* see *idem.*, “Le Système des Beaux-Arts,” *Architecture d’aujourd’hui* no. 182 (December 1975): 96-105.

49 The comparison with the English dwelling design has been pointed out by van Zanten, who remarked that in the picturesque conception from the inside out the interior develops asymmetrically from the main room, proposing a sequence of *tableaux* organically developing outwards and thus resulting in a picturesque exterior composition. Van Zanten, “Le Système des Beaux-Arts,” 104-05.

50 Garnier, quoted in *ibid.*, 99.

51 For a comprehensive discussion on the French *hôtel* type see Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*, Graham Foundation Architecture Series (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1986). For a synthetic approach see Etlin, “The System of the Home,” chap. 5 in *Symbolic Space*.

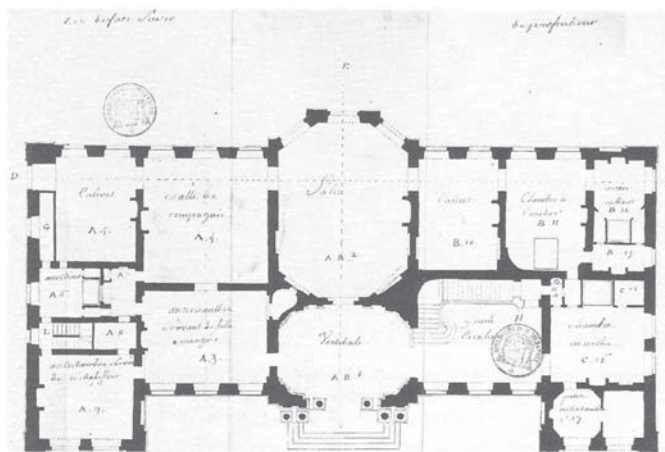


FIG. 98 Blondel. Ideal hôtel. Main floor plan.

mula of an orthogonal composition organized by axes. Early schemes were structured by the axial sequence of *cour d'honneur* (forecourt), *corps de logis* (principal block) and rear garden. Later developments added an orthogonal axis along which the main public spaces of the house were disposed (fig. 98).

The *hôtel* featured the separation of the public sphere from the private, and the hierarchical articulation of public spaces. The generating element from which all the spaces developed was the ceremonial space of the *salon*. Placed at the core of the building, this main living room established a cross-axial scheme organizing the public rooms disposed *en enfilade* along the axes. The entry axis ran through the vestibule and the *salon*, extending to the garden. The orthogonal direction organized the sequence of public rooms along the garden facade, extending the secondary axis to the exterior by windows whenever possible. Meanwhile, the *grand escalier* was placed outside the sequence and the requirements of intimacy located the private spaces at a distance from the most frequented spaces, generating a system of hidden passageways, staircases and secondary spaces.

Tri-dimensional *tableaux en enfilade* drew the main lines of movement along the architectural space. This had several consequences: first, the axes extending to the exterior anchored the building to the site; second, the sequential scheme required special attention to changes of scale, giving birth to a set of new articulating spaces; lastly, the experience of space became a central focus of architectural conception, setting a parameter for the evaluation of the Grand Prix designs in nineteenth-century Beaux-Arts teaching.

Jeanneret knew the Opéra and from the Parisian streets he could glance over the urban *hôtels* spread all over the city and the sequence of their *cour d'honneur / corps de logis*. But the main contact with the French academic doctrine must have come through Perret. Having studied at the Beaux-Arts, Perret had inherited its composi-

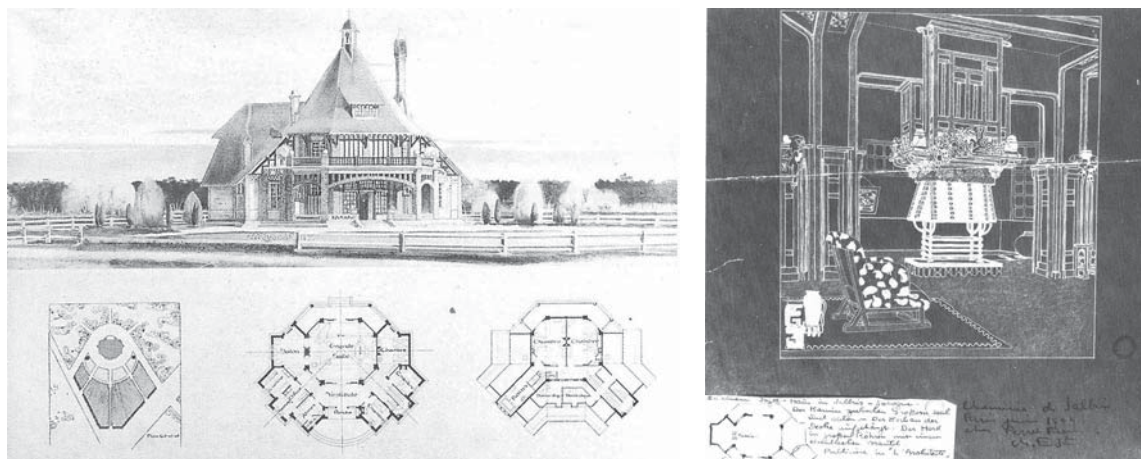


FIG. 99 Perret. Hunting lodge in Salbris. Plans and watercolor, probably by Jeanneret.

FIG. 100 Perret. Hunting lodge in Salbris. Fireplace, drawing by Jeanneret.

tional procedures, with clear consequences in his work.<sup>52</sup>

Although there is not much information on the projects which the Perret brothers were developing in 1908 and 1909, some of them are known. Among them, and beyond the cathedral of Oran, Jeanneret participated in the design of a hotel for Rio de Janeiro, two houses for Dakar, two apartment houses in Paris and a house known as the “maison bouteille” in the surroundings of the city, which was never built. In addition, Jeanneret participated in some ornamental work for the hunting lodge in Salbris, called La Saulot, and for the terrace of 25bis rue Franklin.<sup>53</sup>

When Jeanneret started working with Perret, the project for the hunting lodge in Salbris was at an advanced stage and his participation was limited to the fireplace, some ornamental work and a watercolor (fig. 99, 100).<sup>54</sup> The legacy of the French *hôtel* is clear, though dialoguing with an organic design. The generating element of the building is the central room of the ground floor, defining the bilateral symmetry along the entrance axis, and the exterior, a single volume with a pyramidal silhouette. The

52 Perret studied under Guadet in the Beaux-Arts. Guadet's *Éléments et théorie de l'architecture* (1901)—a book addressed to students—dated the birth of the modern dwelling from the development of the eighteenth-century French *hôtel*, which remained a symbol of French cultural identity throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. He summarized the French compositional principles in four points: first, every building has two distinct kind of spaces, the rooms (surfaces utiles) and the vestibules, corridors and staircases (communications); second, the characteristic element must dominate the composition while the remaining spaces must be subordinated to it; third, the beauty of a composition lies on the arrangement *en enfilade*; lastly, since balance (more than the absolute symmetry) features composition, the picturesque cannot be composed, rather being the result of time, that is, composition is the result of human thought, while the picturesque is produced by time and nature, and thus a building must have an absolute clarity which must be understood in a glance through its plan. See van Zanten, “Le Système des Beaux-Arts”; Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 123.

53 See Petit, *Le Corbusier parle*, 46-47; idem., *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 30; Fanelli and Gargiani, *Confronti*, 12; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 160-69. Mentions of the decoration of Perret's terrace, the projects of Rio de Janeiro and Dakar and the mention of “la composition d'un pavillon de dégustation pour l'établissement d'eaux minérales de Châtel-Guyon” can be found in Jeanneret to parents, 29 September 1908 and 2 February 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1: 215, 245.

54 The plans of the basement and ground floor—March 11 and February 26 respectively—predate Jeanneret's arrival in Paris, as noted by Fanelli and Gargiani, *Confronti*, 13n35. For Jeanneret's collaboration in the ornamental work see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 161-165. In addition, see Petit, *Le Corbusier parle*, 46-47. The watercolor is mentioned in Jeanneret to parents, 9 February 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1: 245.

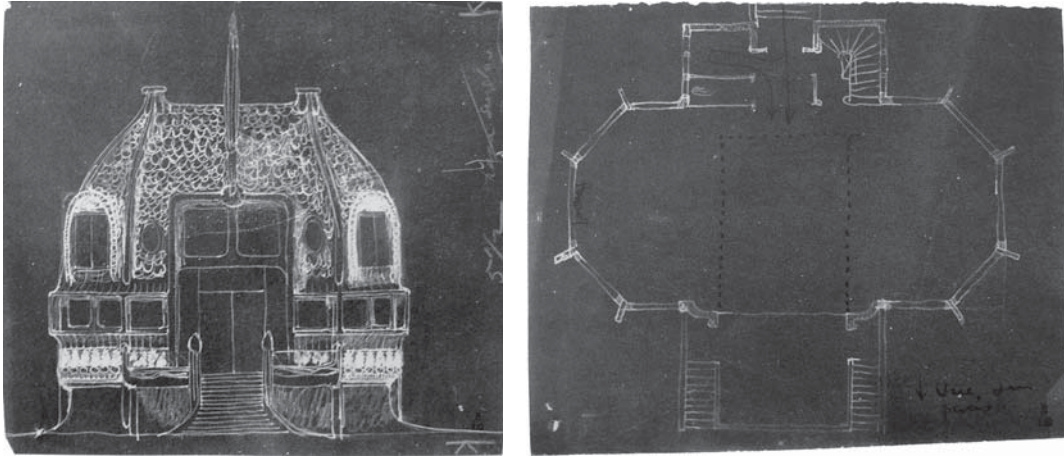


FIG. 101 Perret. Maison bouteille. Elevation.  
 FIG. 102 Perret. Maison bouteille. Ground floor plan.

main axis defines the entrance on one side and the main access to the garden at the opposite side, resonating with the scheme *cour d'honneur*, *corps de logis* and rear garden. The privileged relationship with the garden takes place in the *salon*. The dining room extends the central space to one side, blending the axial development of space with the cross-axial scheme of the eighteenth-century French *hôtel*. The design of the fireplace, in which Jeanneret participated, is a main element of the cross-axial scheme. Conceived as an isolated element hung from the ceiling, it articulates the relationship of central space and dining room. Interrupting the visual cross-axis, the freestanding fireplace counters the transversal asymmetry and reinforces the longitudinal direction. Like in the *hôtel* type, the secondary spaces and circulations—occupying two protruding volumes developing at a 45 degree direction—are set out of the way, insuring that the main experience is that of a sequence of public spaces ending at the encounter with the landscape beyond.

Like the hunting lodge in Salbris, the “maison bouteille” is an adaptation of the traditional scheme of the French *hôtel* to a restricted scale (fig. 101, 102). The two storey house has a rectangular plan cut diagonally at the corners. The ground floor has a single space with a central double-height space. The upper level has two bedrooms, one on each side of the double-height space, linked by a gallery with a view over the lower level. Adopting a bilateral symmetry, the elongated octagonal form develops vertically to the second floor. The exterior reflects the plan in a single volume of Art Nouveau flavor.

The central area of the *salon* generates a subtle biaxial scheme, exploring the principles of *la disposition* of the *hôtel* and the space experience associated with it. Although the ground floor plan is conceived as if it were a single room of a *hôtel*, the double-height space of its central portion sets it apart, providing the space with a hierarchical order. On the one hand, it emphasizes the longitudinal axis linking the entrance to the garden, reinterpreting the sequence of the *cour d'honneur* / *corps de logis* /



rear garden model. The formal monumentality is achieved by the vertical development of space and the axial glazed facade opening to the view, anchoring the building to the site. On the other hand, the double-height space defines two side areas in the main room, suggesting a sequence along the transversal direction which resonates with the arrangement *en enfilade* and extends the view outwards through the side windows.

For Perret and Jeanneret, the most significant aspect of the project seems to have been the inner arrangement.<sup>55</sup> Jeanneret's interest for Perret's design is shown by the blueprints he kept in his possession. Jeanneret drew the dotted lines of the double-height space on the plan, two arrows indicating the access and a third arrow indicating the view over Paris on the garden side.<sup>56</sup> This shows that he paid special attention to the central double-height space and the axial progression with view over the exterior, suggesting that he looked at the "maison bouteille" in terms of the experience of unfolding architectural spaces—a main axial movement ending in the view over Paris.

While, broadly speaking, the narrative underlying Jeanneret's annotations on Perret's plan resonates with the experience proposed in the Villa Fallet—a temporal ordering of events leading to the encounter with the distant city and landscape—consciously or otherwise, Jeanneret was adhering to the Beaux-Arts concept of *la marche* and the axial schemes associated with the experience of unfolding spaces. Resonances of this conceptual procedure will be found in Jeanneret's design of the 1912 villa for his parents—the Maison Blanche, exploring the sequential spaces of its biaxial scheme, either directly leading to the landscape view or to the terrace garden, articulating the house and the view over the valley (fig. 103-105). Jeanneret described it to Perret thus:

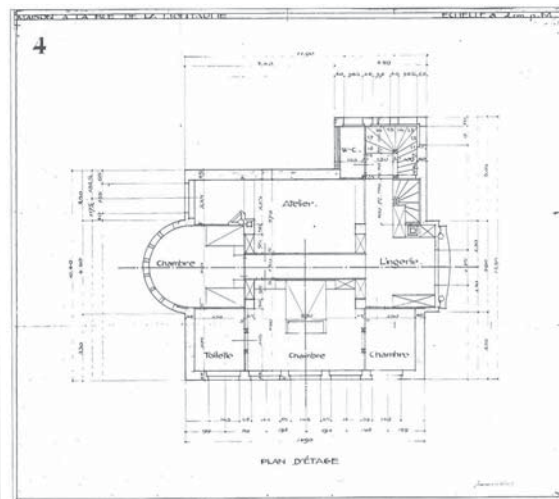
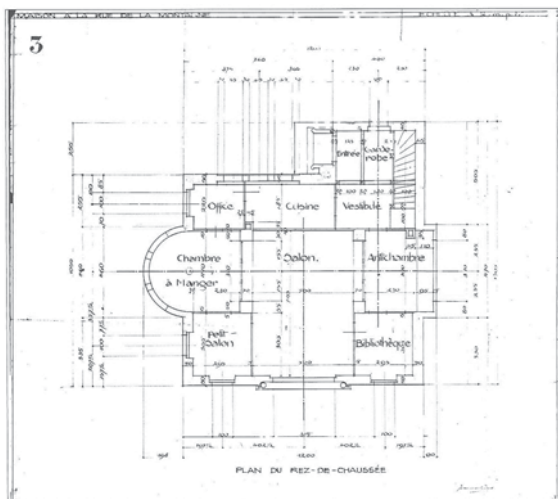
“D'une chambre dans l'autre, on parcourt un organisme ... Des parois vitrées tombent à l'occasion, donnant quatorze mètres de parcours dont l'extrémité est à l'est, un immense vitrage situé sur l'à-pic d'une carrière, dans lequel s'encadre, vis-à-vis, la majestueuse forêt de sapins ... À l'autre bout, trois portes-fenêtres d'un cul-de-four s'ouvrent sur un jardin carré, juché sur une haute terrasse, et depuis le grand vitrage de l'est sous lequel est un grand banc pour se coucher, on verra, cet été, se prolonger au-delà des quatorze mètres, le carré des roses, la grande vasque et un treillage limpide ouvrant de côté, et à cru, dans les grandes hêtres de l'ouest.

De la chambre de mon père, à l'étage, sur ce flanc élevé de montagne, on voit toute la chaîne des monts par les quatre fenêtres qui se touchent, formant galerie sous un long avant-

<sup>55</sup> The "maison bouteille" is so called because of Perret's statement that "a house is like a bottle," which, as noted by Brooks, seems to refer to the great importance he attached to the inner space of the dwelling's design. Brooks, "L'évolution de la conception de l'espace au cours des années d'apprentissage de Charles-Edouard Jeanneret à La Chaux-de-Fonds," in *La Ville et l'Urbanisme après Le Corbusier, Actes du colloque: 1987* (La Chaux-de-Fonds: Éditions d'En Haut, 1993), 19. This fact was mentioned by Le Corbusier several years later. Le Corbusier, quoted in Petit, *Le Corbusier parle*, 46.

<sup>56</sup> The attribution of these indications in black ink to Jeanneret was advanced by Brooks, probably based in the handwritten note. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 169.





**FIG. 103** Jeanneret. Maison Blanche. Sequential arrangement of living room, dining room and terrace garden beyond seen from the anteroom. Ca. 1915-1916.

**FIG. 104** Jeanneret. Maison Blanche. Main floor plan, 1912.

**FIG. 105** Jeanneret. Maison Blanche. Upper floor plan, 1912.

**FIG. 106** Jeanneret. Maison Blanche. Parent's bedroom, with elevated bed and window in a band. Before 1919.

toit plat de plâtre qui limite le ciel et semble diriger la vue plus loin.”<sup>57</sup> (fig. 106)

This influence is also clear in the 1912-1913 Villa Favre-Jacot, in Le Locle, and in a 1916 project for an apartment house, the “Projet F.” The villa is composed of a forecourt, main block and rear garden, giving sequence to a magnificent processional access (fig. 107-108). In the inside, the main axis develops along the entry space, vestibule, hall, and living room opening to the garden at the rear, while a secondary room and the library display the cross-axis opening onto the valley. In the apartment house, the dwelling typology develops along three main rooms enfilade ending in a bow window—a scheme which, interestingly, Jeanneret sketches both obliquely and axially, seemingly echoing the Romantic and Classical models at play (fig. 109-111).<sup>58</sup>

It is however the 1916-1917 Villa Schwob that best expresses the influence of this legacy, bridging between those early works and Le Corbusier’s later dwellings (fig. 112-114). The connection between the “maison bouteille” and the Villa Schwob—a central double-height space opening to the view and two bedrooms on each side on the upper floor linked by a gallery—was proposed by Le Corbusier himself, and has been accepted by most historians, notably Brooks, who has seen in the former the genesis of the latter. This arrangement, Brooks has shown, would later lead to the main scheme of the Citrohan house, the L’Esprit Nouveau pavilion, and the Unités d’habitation.<sup>59</sup>

For our purposes, what interests us is that this genesis of Le Corbusier’s modern dwelling suggests the importance of the concept of *la marche* inherited from Perret. Ozenfant’s article on the Villa Schwob is all the more telling, exploring at length the temporal experience of unfolding spaces in the villa:

“Une chambre est un volume, un espace mesurable qui impressionne par ses trois dimensions ; la succession des différents volumes des différents chambres réagit fortement sur le spectateur et constitue une des parts capitales de la sensation architecturale (notons en passant que les sensations architecturales sont parmi les plus intensément ressenties avec les sensations musicales, et ceci à l’insu souvent de ceux qui les subissent ... l’architecture est comme la musique, elle agit fortement et premièrement, en raison

57 Jeanneret to Perret, 10 March 1913, repr. in *Lettres à Auguste Perret*, 77-78. Full details on the Maison Blanche can be found in Schubert, *La Villa Jeanneret-Perret*, esp. 85-97.

58 For a discussion about the Favre-Jacot and its referential models see Passanti, “Architecture,” 70-76. For the apartment house see Arthur Rüegg, “Projet F,” in *LC Before LC*, 218-219; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 411-414; Jeanneret to Perret, 21 July 1916, repr. in *Lettres à Perret*, 178-182.

59 See Ozenfant [Julien Caron, pseud.], “Une ville de Le Corbusier,” *L’Esprit nouveau*, 6 (1921): 679-704, at the end of which Le Corbusier published the elevation of the “maison bouteille” writing “à César ce qui est à César”; Brooks, “L’évolution de la conception de l’espace,” 19-20. In addition see idem., *Formative Years*, 166-69. Brooks further considers the influence of Josef Hoffmann’s Cabaret Fledermaus, which Jeanneret had visited just before leaving Vienna. Jeanneret sketched it in a notebook and then carefully redrew it in Paris. On his visit see Jeanneret to parents, 27 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:131; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 148. The cabaret has two levels with a central double-height space. The upper areas have a view over the lower level and the stage on axis, resembling the scheme of a theatre.

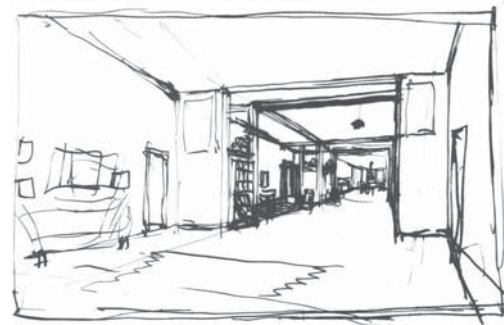
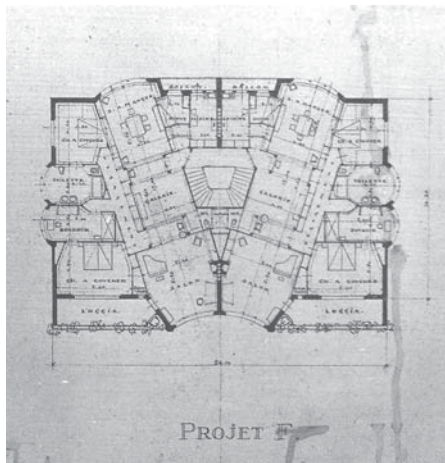
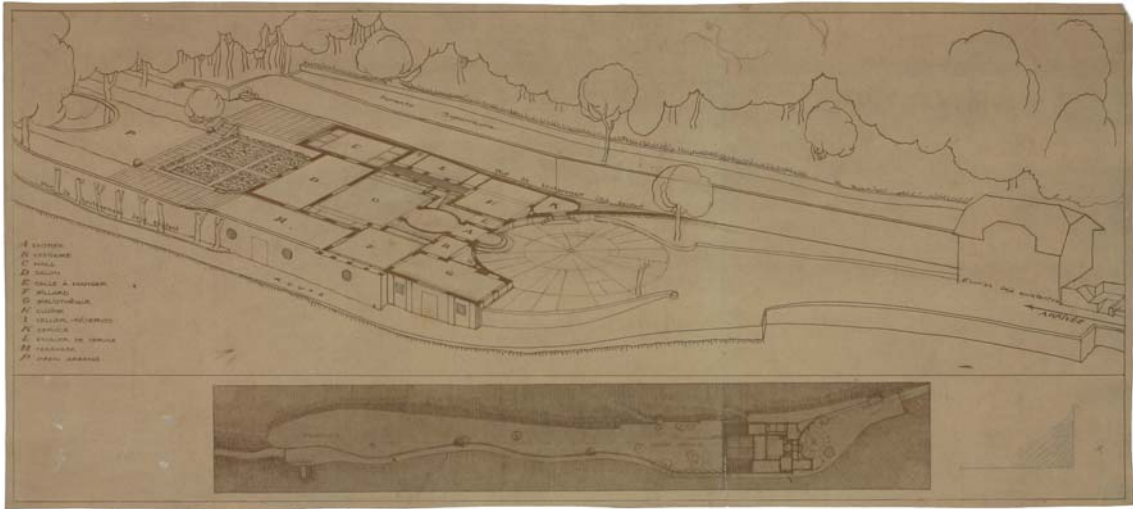
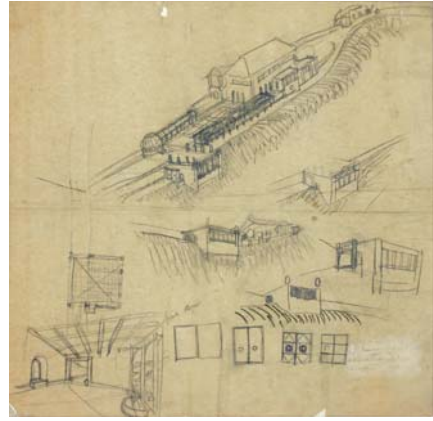
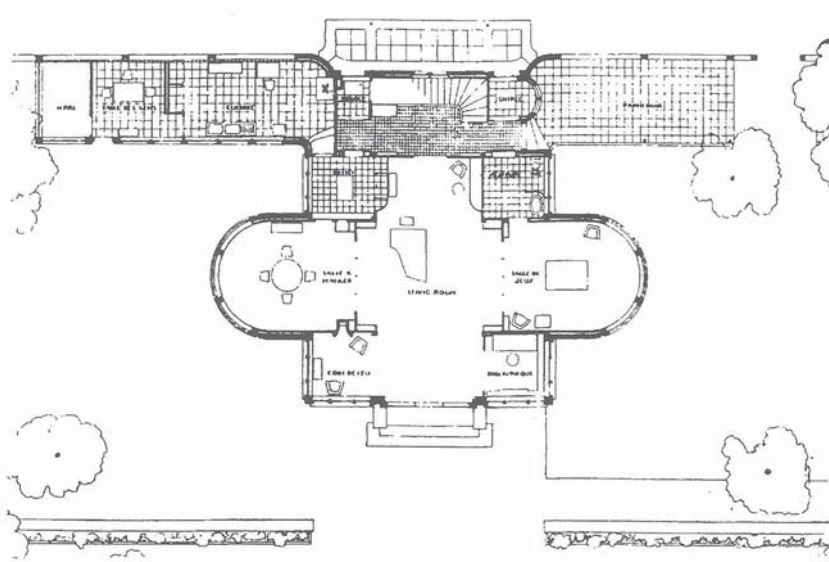
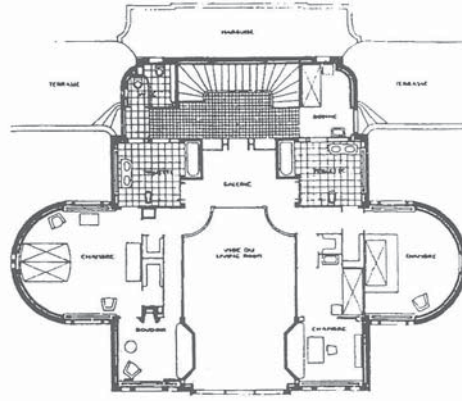


FIG. 107 Jeanneret. Villa Favre-Jacot, Le Locle. Sketches, 1912.  
 FIG. 108 Jeanneret. Villa Favre-Jacot, Le Locle. Plan and site plan, 1912.  
 FIG. 109 Jeanneret. "Projet F" Plan, 1916.  
 FIG. 110 Jeanneret. "Projet F" Sequential arrangement of rooms, 1916.  
 FIG. 111 Jeanneret. "Projet F" Sequential arrangement of rooms, 1916.





**FIG. 112** Jeanneret. Villa Schwob. Second floor plan as built. Published in *L'Esprit nouveau* no. 6 (1921).

**FIG. 113** Jeanneret. Villa Schwob. Ground floor plan as built. Published in *L'Esprit nouveau* no. 6 (1921).

**FIG. 114** Jeanneret. Villa Schwob. Living room, 1920.

des importantes réactions physiques qu'elle provoque). Cette sensation au passage de plusieurs pièces est de l'ordre du volume avant tout et par-dessus tout. D'autres sensations s'y ajoutent ; d'ordre lumière (éclairage), d'ordre couleur, qui suit ; d'ordre décor, qui vient enfin. Agencer les volumes successifs s'offrant au spectateur passant d'une pièce à l'autre, c'est faire ce que fait un musicien quand il ordonne les phases successives d'une composition musicale. Par le volume, l'architecte agit principalement, que ce soit au Colisée, à la villa Adriana ou à la 'Maison du Pendu' de Cézanne. La leçon de Pompéi est une leçon de volume. Elle porte également sur une question capitale, celle de l'ouverture et de la proportion des portes dans le mur. La dimension des portes et la dimension des salles, la proportion du mur et la proportion de la porte sont, pour l'architecture, semblables aux valences qui déterminent l'individualité d'un corps.

Certains esthéticiens ont attribué au jeu des divers niveaux du sol d'un ensemble architecturale des significations subjectives caractérisées, du reste parfaitement vraies, contrôlées et ressenties ; une marche, trois marches, jouent un rôle esthétique bien différent. L'afflux de la lumière dans une architecture est un des facteurs essentiels ; une salle peut être transformée suivant que celle-ci y pénètre bien ou mal. La pleine clarté ou le jour diffus influent fortement sur notre système sensitif : l'architecture a son clair-obscur, clair obscur physique et clair-obscur sentimental.

En conclusion, l'architecture agit par le volume, par la lumière et par les rapports de dimensions ...”<sup>60</sup>

These words—and particularly the mention of Pompeii—leave no doubt as to Le Corbusier's role in writing the article. In associating the regular, axial scheme of the Villa Schwob and the importance attached to the temporal experience of space, we find evidence that the genesis of Le Corbusier's modern dwellings proposed by Brooks cannot be thought of without taking into account the influence of *la marche* in the envisioned experience of Le Corbusier's dwelling types. Moreover, the mention of both the “maison bouteille” and the dwelling typology of Pompeii suggest the role of the former in the interpretation of the Roman houses.

The work with Perret thus meant a displacement of the analogy with nature of the Villa Fallet and of the discourse on the Gothic toward a more abstract conception of architecture focused on sequential spaces. Significantly, what is common to the Villa Fallet, the hunting lodge, and the “maison bouteille” is the narrative generated by the unfolding spaces leading to the landscape view. For Jeanneret, this makes this experiential pattern structured by the experiences of prospect and expanse a privileged vehicle through which to interpret Perret's work.

The fullest contribution of Perret to the comprehensive architectural promenade of Le Corbusier's dwellings must however take into account the apartment house at 25bis rue Franklin (1903), where Jeanneret worked daily. On one level, the apartments'



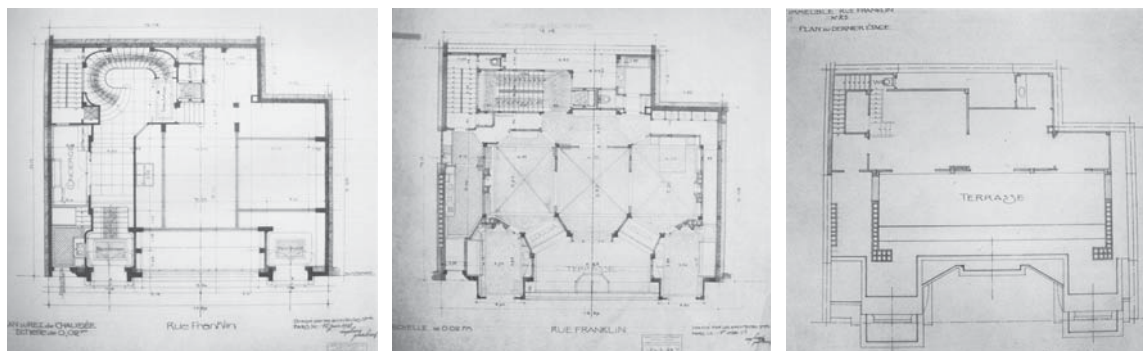


FIG. 115, 116, 117 Perret. 25bis Rue Franklin. Ground floor plan, typical floor plan, and upper level plan.

layout remains closely rooted in the French classicist arrangement of rooms, here inflected by the organic rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc. On another level, the spatial arrangement is integrated in the vertical scheme of the modern type of the urban apartment house, displaying the experience of *la marche* within a wider, vertical experience and inscribing it in a new relationship with the city.

Perret's nine level building, designed for a plot on the crest of the hill of Passy, faces the Trocadero and the Eiffel tower. On the ground floor was the Perret brothers' office; the rooms for the domestic servants were on the eighth floor; and above that was Auguste Perret's own residence (fig. 115, 116, 117). Each of the remaining floors has a single dwelling, the layout of which has three main areas: the vertical circulation and the sanitary installations to the rear; the horizontal circulation and kitchen forming a peripheral U shape enveloping the main rooms; and the main rooms, also forming a U shape around the *forecourt*, opening to the view by virtue of a judicious arrangement of oblique partitions.

Structurally, the building consists of a concrete frame and infill walls, with the frame embedded in the walls (except on the ground floor where the point-supports are visible as freestanding pillars in the open space of Perret's office).<sup>61</sup> The exterior surfaces are sheathed in ceramic tiles with vegetable motifs of Art Nouveau flavor, distinguishing between structural and non-structural elements (fig. 118). Beyond express-

<sup>61</sup> The episode of Jeanneret's visit to Grasset first suggests that it was the use of reinforced concrete that led Jeanneret to Perret. However, Jeanneret did not show interest in Perret's recently built Garage Ponthieu (1907), for instance, where Perret had first exposed raw concrete. During the Parisian stay he never drew, photographed, or mentioned it in his correspondence. It was, as remarked by Brooks, too avant-garde for his Art Nouveau taste. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 169. This seems to indicate that Jeanneret's attention to the materials used in the building was not about the new possibilities of spatial arrangement that the Hennebique system provided and even less about the plastic expressiveness of reinforced concrete. Although referring to Anatole de Baudot's Saint-Jean de Montmartre church, Le Corbusier himself confessed that by that time he did not recognize the importance of reinforced concrete. See Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 30. Baudot had become the leader of the rationalist movement after the death of Viollet-le-Duc and was committed to develop a new architectural style freed from historicism through new reinforced concrete techniques. It is therefore significant, as noted by Dumont, that Jeanneret never mentioned nor attended Baudot's *cours*. Dumont, *Le Corbusier: Lettres à Charles L'Éplattenier*, 185n2. For Baudot see idem., "The Philosophers' Stone: Anatole de Baudot and the French Rationalists," *Rassegna* no. 49 (March 1992): 37-43.

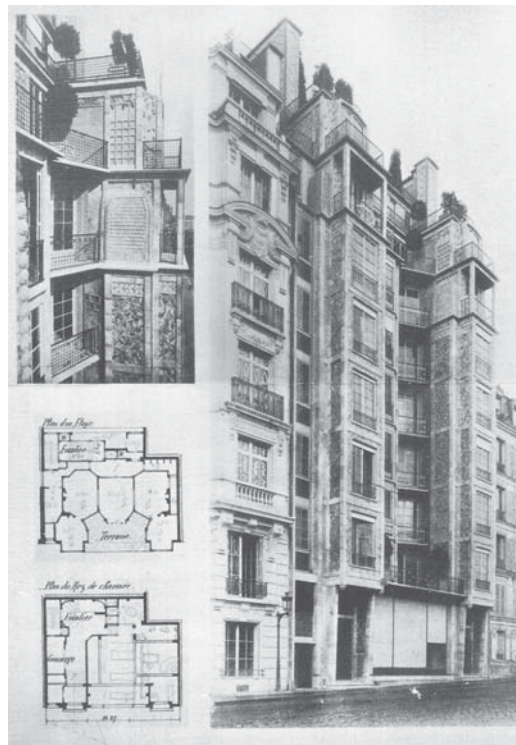


FIG. 118 Perret. 25bis Rue Franklin. Page magazine owned by Jeanneret.

ing the tectonic nature of the building, the play between structure and infill reveals the metaphorical evocation of the tree. This reflects Viollet-le-Duc's discourse, engaged with both the link between Gothic and Greek rationalism and the Romantic belief that art finds its means in the imitation of nature, expressed in the privileged metaphor of the tree. Through this analogy, the structural tensions of Gothic architecture and its vertical development were also comparable to the vitality of organic life.<sup>62</sup>

For our purposes, the most interesting influence of Viollet-le-Duc's organic analogy on 25bis rue Franklin is found in the dialog it establishes with the model of the French *hôtel particulier* type in the spatial arrangement of the apartments. This dialog has been discussed by Henri Bresler.<sup>63</sup>

On the one hand Perret's design inverts the traditional scheme of the Parisian housing blocks by eliminating the rear court commonly used to provide illumination and ventilation to the back rooms, displacing it to the front.<sup>64</sup> Perret's inversion of the traditional scheme was part of a broader exploration of *hôtel* typology on his part,

62 On the influence of Viollet-le-Duc in the conceptual principles of Perret's design see Martin Bressani, "L'Albero e la ragione," *Rassegna* no. 28, "Perret: 25bis rue Franklin" (1986): 63-73.

63 Henri Bresler, "Finestre su corte," in "Perret: 25bis rue Franklin," *Rassegna* no. 28 (1986): 48-52. In addition, see Pierre Saddy, "Perret et les idées reçues," *Architecture Mouvement Continuité* no.37 (November 1975).

64 This reformulation of the typological scheme was partially prompted by the new urban legislation, which replaced the uniformity and alignment of Haussmannian façades with a picturesque urban morphology based on receding and protruding elements (such as bay windows) capable of improving hygienic and light conditions. See Bresler, "Finestre su corte," 48-51.



FIG. 119 Perret. 25bis Rue Franklin. Sixth floor apartment. Axial view of the living room.

FIG. 120 Perret. 25bis Rue Franklin. Sixth floor apartment. Living room.

FIG. 121 Perret. 25bis Rue Franklin. Sixth floor apartment. Living room and bedroom.

for use in the design of urban apartments. The arrangement proposes a clear separation between the main rooms on the one hand, and the circulation and services on the other. The main rooms, at the centre, constitute the generating element, adopting the monumental composition of the Beaux-Arts: three sequential rooms arranged *enfilade* opening to the view. The formal monumentality of the biaxial system of the Beaux-Arts and the visual effects of the French *hôtel* are fully explored within the small dimensions of the dwelling. From the entry corridor, three doors disposed like a triptych open to the living rooms. Having entered the central room, space explodes in every direction displaying the theatrical effects through planes disposed at 90, 60 and 45 degrees (fig. 119, 120, 121). The main axis opens to the forecourt through the bay window, providing a view over the treetops to the Trocadero and the Eiffel tower. The two lateral main rooms display oblique visual axes revealing the dimension of the flat. On the sides, the aesthetic pleasure of the three main rooms arranged *enfilade* is extended *ad infinitum* by mirrors disposed face to face.<sup>65</sup>

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On the other hand, Perret's adaptation of the classicist scheme to the narrow plot, generating a *habitation autour d'un centre* obliquely disposed to assure illumination and ventilation in all the rooms, falls into an organic analogy by introducing a geometric system of orthogonal and oblique planes developing from a central space, the

<sup>65</sup> On these mirrors and the theatrical effects associated with them see Bresler, "Finestre su corte," 58.

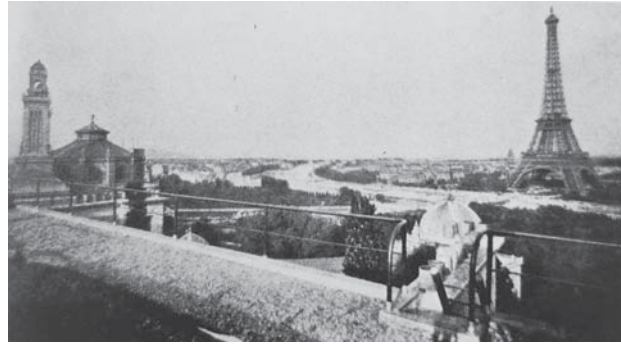
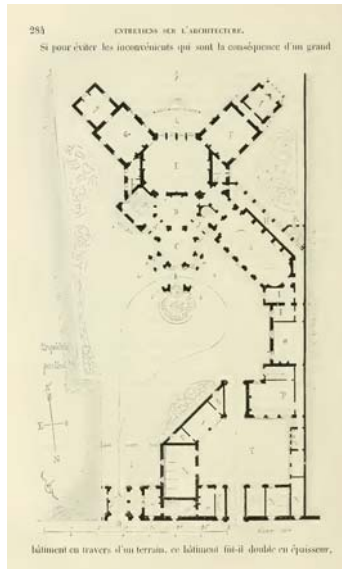


FIG. 122 Viollet-le-Duc. Page from *Entretiens*. Ideal hôtel. Plan.  
FIG. 123 25bis Rue Franklin. View from the upper floor terrace.

root—a feature also recognizable in the hunting lodge in Salbris. This scheme, Bresler has further noted, had been proposed by Viollet-le-Duc. In his seventeenth *Entretien*, he had proposed the ideal solution for a villa on a narrow plot (fig. 122). Preserving the advantages of the *cour d'honneur / corps de logis / garden* scheme, the plan adopts the main principles of the French *hôtel*. The fundamental difference is the oblique development of the side rooms, justified by its advantages at various levels: circulation, economy, light and ventilation.<sup>66</sup>

Building upon Viollet-le-Duc and Guadet, Perret reconciles the *hôtel* type with the organic analogy and proposes a modern flexible arrangement that, as Bresler has noted, does not try to subvert traditional social codes and rituals of receiving. What really matters in the apartments of the rue Franklin, one would say, is *la distribution* and the experience associated with it. This becomes particularly clear if we think that the structural principle does not adopt a logic of its own, independent from the apartments' layout, rather adapting itself to the arrangement, the rigidity of which is, as Saddy has noted, the opposite of the free plan.<sup>67</sup>

For Le Corbusier's later work, the most interesting feature is that the sequence *cour d'honneur / corps de logis / rear garden* is here reinterpreted within a broader ascending narrative, which starts at the entrance of the building on the ground floor level, with the elevated vestibule giving access to the stairs in the rear, and ultimately leads to a high vantage point establishing a new relationship with the city.

Jeanneret's attention to the view is already manifest in the first days of work at Perret's office. Jeanneret praised the glazed façade because it made him feel as if he

<sup>66</sup> See Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens*, 2:283-290.

<sup>67</sup> Saddy, "Perret et les idées reçues," 22.



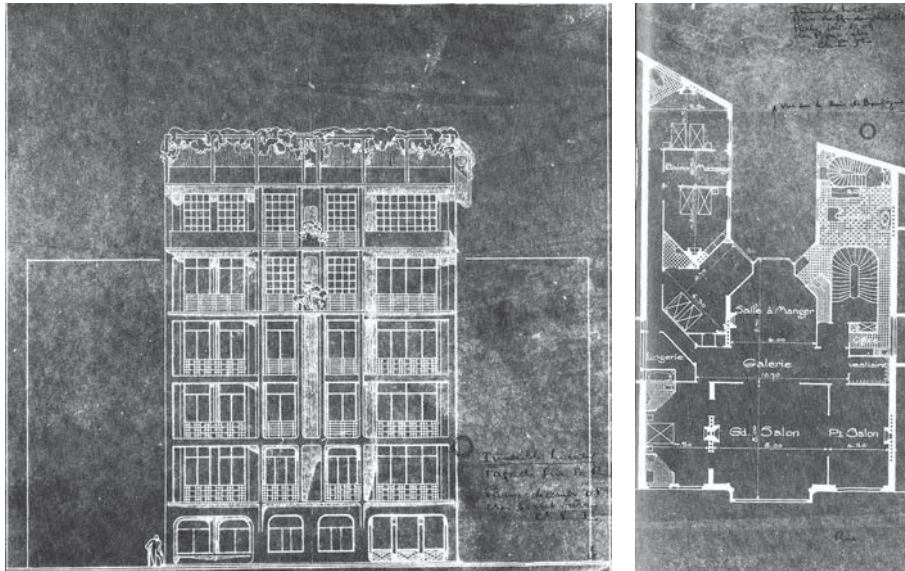


FIG. 124 Perret. Apartment house in Paris. Street façade.  
 FIG. 125 Perret. Apartment house in Paris. Typical plan.

was in a park.<sup>68</sup> Also, he was certainly impressed by the view from Perret’s residence on the upper floor—a single space opening to a vast terrace above the treetops of the Trocadero, providing this new relationship with the city with the highest vantage point: a bird’s eye view over Paris (fig. 123). The most elaborate experience was however that of the intermediate levels, enriched by the apartments’ layout. A magazine page kept by Jeanneret, where he marked the exact dimensions of the several rooms of the typical floor plan, shows that he looked at the layout with careful attention (fig. 118). And the scheme is reflected in his 1916 “Projet F,” whose concrete skeleton, Arthur Rüegg has noted, follows the logic of the spatial arrangement,<sup>69</sup> like in Perret’s 25bis rue Franklin.

The importance of the view over the city from an elevated dwelling emerges in two more commissions of Perret, partially reinforcing its association with the apartments’ sequential arrangement. The commissions are two apartment houses in Paris in which Jeanneret also participated, the only existing drawings of these being the ones at the Fondation Le Corbusier archive. From the first one there is a typical floor plan dated December 1908 and an elevation drawing (fig. 124). Its most significant feature is the roof pergola with vegetation. This suggests that the terrace was intended to be used as a living space, a forerunner of Le Corbusier’s elevated gardens offering a privileged view over the city. The extant drawings of the second apartment house are two plans, one of the ground floor and another of the typical floor dated February 1909 (fig. 125). Although maintaining the traditional court at the rear, the apartments’ layout echoes the French *hôtel* scheme: three main rooms *en enfilade* at the front; the axial arrangement of court, dining room and *salon* projecting outwards; the separation of

68 Jeanneret to parents, 28 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1: 191.

69 Rüegg, “Projet F,” 218.



bedrooms, services and vertical communications from the biaxial arrangement of the public spaces. Once more, the classical arrangement is associated with the view offered to the inhabitant. Jeanneret's handwritten note reads: "vue sur le Bois de Boulogne."

All this suggests that Jeanneret fully assimilated the experiential qualities implicated in Perret's works. The connections to Viollet-le-Duc in some of them would undoubtedly facilitate Jeanneret's absorption of its classicist qualities. For Viollet-le-Duc, design should be based on nature, apprehended through the observation of its geometry. For Jeanneret, to whom these concepts were familiar, the organic analogy provided an easy interpretation of Perret's design for the rue Franklin, both in its exterior ornament and in its interior arrangement. But the privileged link between both models—organic rationalism and Beaux-Arts classicism—seems indeed to be the narrative dimension. The synthesis of organic rationalism and Classicism in the apartments on the 25bis rue Franklin may have helped Jeanneret to connect the sequential spaces of the Villa Fallet with the French *hôtel* type. More importantly, the ascending narrative of the Villa Fallet could provide the link between the French *hôtel* and the broader narrative involved in the vertical scheme of Perret's apartment house.

All things considered, the vertical development of the housing blocks, the sequential scheme of the apartments, and the view over the city from a high vantage point suggest that, during his Parisian stay, his experience of Perret's building constituted the first step to the re-elaboration of his earlier concerns with a comprehensive ascending narrative, but now within the context of the modern city.

This went together with a new attitude towards the city. Positivism had raised the city to the primary manifestation of progress. Perret's apartment houses owe to this nineteenth-century fascination with the city and confidence in progress. Incorporating in their vertical development the nineteenth-century virtues of the suburban villa, retreated into the country, they provided their inhabitants with the spectacle of the city from afar. As the suburban villa, so the apartments of Perret were conceived of as a place of mental reflection from which the city was offered as a meditative resource.<sup>70</sup> The city had become the new landscape.

This context clarifies Perret's urban vision and concept of modern housing. His 1905 urban proposal to surround Paris with a belt of twenty-storey towers fuses the

<sup>70</sup> This assessment is discussed by Bressani through the influence a complex web of associations derived from the writings of César Daly or Emile Zola. Daly worked with Victor Considérant in the development of urban projects based on the theories of Charles Fourier. The suburban villa was, for Daly, a character of modern civilization because it "embodied the modern principle of 'confort in liberty, the city in the country.' Within the villa, the individual could fully blossom, 'satisfied by the salutary and hygienic action of vegetation upon the health of the body and the 'elasticity' of the mind.' Daly's villa became a sort of sanctum in which the family ritual was enacted and in which the private garden acquired therapeutic, even moralizing, virtues ... the villa was ultimately a fragment of the city." Bressani, "The Spectacle of the City of Paris from 25bis Rue Franklin," *Assemblage* no. 12 (August 1990): 84–107.

suburban villa and the apartment block (*maison à loyer*), conceiving of the modern dwelling “high above ground, in an ideal plane of pure air, silence, and spectacle” in which the city “was to serve as a catalyst for meditation on collective becoming.”<sup>71</sup> It need hardly be said that Le Corbusier’s work was deeply informed by the range of themes involved in Perret’s urban type, from the notion of the suburbs as a return to nature, to the view of the city as a distant living scenario and the ensuing combination of two key housing types in a collective vertical building of individual villas.<sup>72</sup>

There are several indications that this way of thinking the dualities dwelling/city and city/landscape is rooted in this early working period with Perret. The city of Paris was a main theme of discussion with Perret.<sup>73</sup> Also, Jeanneret’s attention to the view over natural spaces from the vertical apartment houses—be it the Trocadero or the Bois de Boulogne—seems to parallel that to the view over the city offered from the suburbs, as indicated in the blueprint of the “maison bouteille.” Finally, while Jeanneret remained attached to the view of nature as a meaningful scenario, one finds his enthusiasm for a cosmopolitan Paris since his arrival, gradually matching that for nature.<sup>74</sup>

Several features associated to this renewed look upon the city from an elevated dwelling may be advanced: the objectification of the cityscape in referential symbols capable of stirring emotion; the reinterpretation of a narrative pattern involving the experiences of prospect, shelter and expanse; the symbolic dimension of the ascending narrative.

In Le Corbusier’s urban plans, the natural and the manmade compete in their referential role, establishing a dialogue between the Sublime natural elements and the symbols of the modern era. This parallel of natural and architectural elements extends back to Jeanneret’s 1907 reaction to the Florentine dome and seems to be Jeanneret’s way of absorbing the modern city in this early Parisian period. Like the Florentine dome, the Eiffel tower seen from afar paralleled the grandeur and sublimity of nature. The connection with the aesthetic category of the Sublime is clear if we compare Jeanneret’s watercolor of Florence and the description of the Eiffel tower diagonally thrust-

71 Bressani, “The Spectacle,” 85-87, 95-97.

72 On Perret as a source for Le Corbusier’s urban thinking and *Ville Contemporaine*’s skyscrapers see Passanti, “Skyscrapers.”

73 Le Corbusier, “Perret,” 7. In addition see Gauthier, *Le Corbusier*, 28; Petit, *Le Corbusier parle*, 46-47; idem., *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 30, where Le Corbusier acknowledges the debt of his urban conception to Perret.

74 Jeanneret’s enthusiasm with the city of Paris—contrasting with his reaction to Vienna—dates back to the early days of his stay. He frequently argued on his good choice for having moved to Paris, extolling the city and its intense cultural activity: “... ici on parle de Phidias, là de Puvis, là Wagner, tandis que d’autres tout à fait emballés lancent Descartes à la tête de celui qui le cinglait de Socrate. Tout ça ce ne sont pas des phrases que je vous fais, mais c’est la vérité, c’est une occasion entre gens dont la vie est la recherche de l’idéal d’échanger leurs pensées, et de faire part de leurs découvertes. Vous comprendrez maintenant pourquoi Paris m’enchanté.” Jeanneret to Parents, 20 April 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:174-75.



**FIG. 126.** Jeanneret. Paris. Skyline with Notre-Dame painted from the window of his attic room at the Hôtel d'Orient, 9 rue des Écoles, July 1908.

**FIG. 127.** Paris. Jeanneret at the Hôtel d'Orient with Notre-Dame in the background, 1908.

ing upwards among the mist, establishing a dialogue with the vast sky:

“... je suis amoureux depuis quinze jours ...je vous dirai de suite que c'est la tour Eiffel qui allume ainsi en moi un brasier ardent! Paris est l'enchantement du gris, du plus beau gris nuancé et riche ; la tour Eiffel est l'œuvre de finesse, et de hardi élancement ; et de brume ; demain de Paris en fait un poème et une œuvre d'art : un galbe superbe et une contenance si harmonieuse quand elle se présente en diagonale ! Du gris sombre au sommet, clair à la base, quand le ciel est fourré d'épais gris Rousse intense dans les flâques de feux du couchant et parmi les îles denses et opaques bleues des nuages.”<sup>75</sup>

As with the landscape, in this progressive adherence to the optimistic view of the city the spectacle is objectified in its major symbols, and these are connected to the experiences of shelter and of the sublime in urban life (fig. 126, 127). Freed from the analogy with nature, Jeanneret seems to have transposed the experiential pattern of the Jura landscape—prospect, shelter and expanse—to the realm of the urban dwelling.

### CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE AND ROMANTIC EXPERIENCE: VERSAILLES AND ATGET

A last manifestation of the dialogue between classicism and romanticism in Jeanneret's Parisian sojourn that I would like to address is found in his reaction to Versailles, about one year after his arrival in Paris. During the Parisian sojourn he had remained steadfast in his Ruskinian education. His contact with Beaux-Arts design had been filtered by Perret and he only gradually adhered to it. He repeatedly refused to go to Versailles, arguing that classicism was decadent. Despite Perret's insistence he only visited it in May 1909, during his parents' visit. He was nonetheless impressed by

<sup>75</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 11 March 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:255-56.

the parterres, the orangerie and the One Hundred Steps.<sup>76</sup> The first impact must have been caused by the scale. After the experience of the Florentine dome and its association with Blanc's aesthetic category of the Sublime he could not fail to notice how the man-made rivals with nature, and he visited more than once.<sup>77</sup> In his later trips to Paris between 1912 and 1916, he repeatedly visited Versailles, again giving special attention to the orangerie and the One Hundred Steps.<sup>78</sup>

Some of the drawings and photographs made in these later visits have been seen as an interest in how Versailles reconciles differences in level. Also, the way the volumes of the palace advance and retreat has been read as an example of the setback (*lotissements à redents*).<sup>79</sup> By the same token, this volumetric play can be related with the project for the Palace of the League of Nations, where the unfolding planes of the linear blocks of the Secretariat establish a rhythm along the main axial access.<sup>80</sup> But while in the 1927 project it is the straight approach that assures the sense of the whole at eye level, in 1909 Jeanneret—coming from medieval preferences and picturesque aesthetics—was neither ready to accept the rigid architectural geometry, nor to swap the Rousseauian quality of the landscape gardens for parterres and topiary.

Beyond the postcards that he may have bought at this early stage, the single graphic element of 1909 that seems to have survived until today is a photograph of the west parterre (fig. 128).<sup>81</sup> The central body of the palace is on the right, in the background, set against a foreground vase slightly out of axis. While the monumental architectural symmetry is secondary, Jeanneret's focus seems to be on space. The sense of scale and spatial depth are achieved by joining near and far both in the vanishing rhythm of the ornamental vases and in the counterpoint between the foreground vase and the palace. The foreground vase thus acts as a *repoussoir*—a device explored by Jeanneret in his early landscape representations, we have seen, in order to convey the continuation of space beyond the pictorial plane and to impart the idea of unfolding views (e.g., fig. 51).

76 See Le Corbusier, "Perret," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* no. 7 (October 1932): 8. Jeanneret guided his parents into the city during their visit between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May. Reviewing the itinerary he wrote on Versailles: "Vendredi – Beau jour de Versailles, les bassins et ses statues de fleuve, ses urnes, l'escalier colossal de l'Orangerie – la ligne colossale aussi du Palais vu des jardins. Ce fut merveilleux." Jeanneret to parents, 23 May 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:263-69.

77 When his brother visited him in August Jeanneret also took him to Versailles, writing to his parents "Ai-je besoin de vous dire que la visite à Versailles fut et reste un souvenir resplendissant. La journée était de toute beauté et je n'ai pas besoin de vous raconter ce que vous savez déjà." Jeanneret to parents, 9 August 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:278.

78 Brooks, *Formative Years*, 346. See also Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 January 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 258; Jeanneret to Ritter, 2 January 1913.

79 Von Moos, *Elements of a Synthesis*, 147; Antonio Bruculeri, "Versailles," in *LC Before LC*, 162.

80 See Colquhoun, "Grands Travaux."

81 The photograph holds the handwritten date of August 1909 by Le Corbusier. For the date of this image and that of the remaining photographs of Versailles by Jeanneret see Tim Benton, *Le Corbusier: Secret Photographer* (Baden: Lars Müller, 2013), esp. 37, 144-147. A set of postcards of Versailles can be found in the Fondation Le Corbusier archive.



FIG. 128 Jeanneret. Versailles. West parterre, August 1909.

Based on this photograph, one is led to believe that the core experience at Versailles is a spatial experience, with the oblique view serving to enhance the depth of the empty space. But had Jeanneret been interested in an axial approach to space, a sense of depth could very well have been achieved in an orthogonal orientation. When thought of in light of the Jura early drawings this oblique viewpoint seems to relate to the unfolding experience of the parterre and palace. And as we have seen in the case of Santa Croce, this kind of oblique approach to an orthogonal layout was not new in Jeanneret.

The diagonal approach of Jeanneret's photograph, extraneous to the geometry of the garden, also brings to mind the work of the French photographer Eugène Atget, who extensively photographed Paris from the 1890s until his death in 1927, including Versailles—most intensively explored between 1901 and 1906, and again between 1921 and 1926.<sup>82</sup> His commissions included a wide range of themes, from architecture (ornamental façades, details, etc) to urban scenes. French gardens were among his favorite subjects.

In trying to articulate his impression of grandeur at Versailles through his Romantic background, Jeanneret probably devoted some of his study afternoons to it, becoming acquainted with the extensive iconography that was available at the time, a significant part of which was by Atget. By the time Jeanneret arrived in Paris, Atget's work was widely disseminated. Atget earned his living selling his work to tourists, antiquarians, booksellers, publishers and public libraries. Also, his photographs were meant as source material for a broad range of artists: architects, set designers, decora-

<sup>82</sup> For a comprehensive survey on Atget's work see John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg, *The Work of Atget*, 4 vols. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981-85).



tors, engravers, illustrators, sculptors and painters. Grasset, for instance, whom Jeanneret had personally met at his arrival in Paris, was among his clients. In addition, his work could be found in several institutions. In 1905, as part of a larger campaign to preserve Old Paris, Georges Cain, the Chief Curator of the Musée Carnavalet (the museum of the art and history of Paris), bought six hundred of Atget's photographs of "The Decorative Arts as applied to Construction in Old Paris." The following year, Marcel Poëte, pioneer urban historian and chief librarian at the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, chose Atget to update the photographic collection of Parisian scenes dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century, enlarging the collection of Atget's images well beyond 2500.<sup>83</sup> Beyond these, his images were found in the collections of institutions such as the Musée Éthnographique du Trocadéro, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the École des Beaux-Arts, or the École Boule.

Even if unaware of its authorship, Jeanneret's medievalist tendencies may have led him to Atget's photographic survey of Old Paris. Beyond the libraries and museums he used to frequent, and postcards, another source could have been Poëte's exhibitions and publications on the history of Paris.<sup>84</sup> The work of Atget suited Jeanneret's proclivities. Unlike most architectural photographers, for whom it was paramount to achieve the regularity and frontality of elevation drawings, Atget rejected a static, symmetrical balance to embrace non-classical asymmetrical compositions. Angled views of vanishing streets, deprived of human figures, glimpses into courtyards, banisters with the stairs disappearing behind a wall or developing beyond the frame, or architectural façades with doors intentionally left open or ajar, suggest a narrative of unfolding spaces which leaves the viewer dangling. This photographic approach spans all of Atget's themes, two of them being particularly worth mentioning. First, the images of old twisting streets in medieval Paris, which, as we will see in the next chapter, have much in common with some aspects of Jeanneret's 1910 research on urban design (fig.

<sup>83</sup> On Atget and his clients see Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1992). The book includes a dated record of Atget's sales to the Parisian institutions between 1898 and 1928, and a list of other public and private clients, although not complete. In addition, see Hambourg, "The Structure of the Work," in Szarkowski and Hambourg, *The Work of Atget*, 3:18-20.

<sup>84</sup> A limited research on Atget's work has shown that, among Jeanneret's postcards of Versailles, there is at least one by Atget (FLC L5-7-272), which is a cropped photograph of La Cour de Marbre dated from 1903 (BNF - Est. Eo 109b bte 24).

Poëte's work is extensive: *Évolution de Paris et art urbain* (1907-1908); *L'Enfance de Paris: formation et croissance de la ville des origines jusqu'à Philippe Auguste* (Paris: Colin, 1908); *Une promenade à travers Paris, au temps des romantiques* (1908). After 1909 Jeanneret also may have become acquainted with Poëte's: *Les transformations de Paris sous la Second Empire* (1910); *Sur les boulevards Madeleine-Bastille depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'au Second Empire* (1912). The work of Poëte would become an essential source for Jeanneret's 1915 researches at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and in the 1920s both men would be in steady contact. See Philippe Duboy, "Bibliothèque Nationale: Paris 1915," in *Encyclopédie*, 73-76; Bruccleri, "The Challenge of the "Grand Siècle," in *LC Before LC*, 99-100.



FIG. 129 Atget. Paris. Porte du Dragon, rue de Rennes, n.d.

FIG. 130 Atget. Paris. Hôtel de Castries, n.d.

129). Second, the images of urban French *hôtels*, which he insistently photographed obliquely putting in evidence the sequence of street/forecourt/main block (fig. 130).

If Jeanneret looked into Atget's photographic collections at some of the institutions that he frequented, he also may have become aware of another of his uncommon procedures. As pointed out by Hamburg, Atget's method of documenting something generally followed the logical unfolding of visual experience, tracing his path of discovery. This resulted in a sequence of frames which "progressed from far to near, from whole to part, and from exterior to interior" (fig. 131-133)<sup>85</sup> Jeanneret could connect this both with Ruskin and Töpffer. But in Atget this method was most explicit when applied to architecture, thus providing a bridge between the notion of unfolding nature familiar to Jeanneret with that of unfolding urban landscape and architectural space, as in angled views of streets or urban *hôtels*.<sup>86</sup>

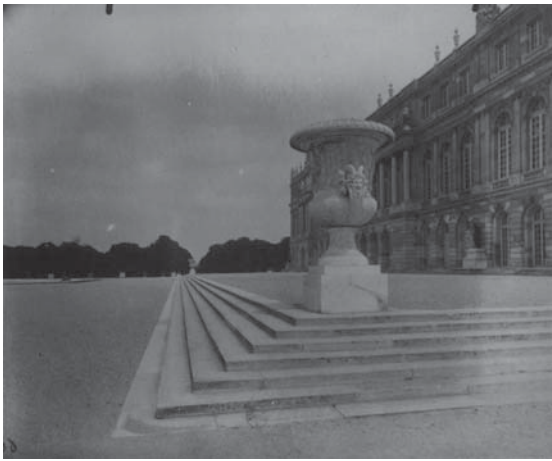
The commissions to portray ornament and statuary took Atget to Versailles. He did not separate the utilitarian purpose of his work from his personal artistic interpretation, as Hamburg has noted, and his photographs gradually became a pictorial problem of space representation. He started to off-center the ornamental motifs—statuary, pools, or balustrades—setting them against vanishing alleys, or pairing them with distant shapes and motifs (fig. 134, 135). By centering them as a single subject, he raised space to the main subject of his work. The sense of spatial depth was amplified by joining near and far, the element in the foreground often being magnified by positioning the camera at a low vantage point at a short distance. In such viewpoints,

<sup>85</sup> Hamburg, "Structure of the Work," 15.

<sup>86</sup> A vast sample of Atget's frames of picturesque urban landscapes can be found in Szarkowski and Hamburg, *The Work of Atget*, vol. 2, *The Art of Old Paris* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982).



FIG. 131, 132, 133 Atget. Paris. Hôtel du Marquis d'Ecqueville, after 1900. Forecourt; Grand escalier; rear court.



**FIG. 134** Atget. Versailles. West parterre, 1903.

**FIG. 135** Atget. Versailles. West parterre, 1901.

graphically rich flights of steps enlivened vanishing perspectives through accelerated perspectives, further contributing to the dynamism of the image.<sup>87</sup>

Looking at the composition, balance and sense of spatial depth of Jeanneret's photograph, it is tempting to think that he had become acquainted with Atget's work. Beyond the formalist concession, one senses a similar intuitive spatial recognition pervading Jeanneret's image. Because he could recognize in Atget his picturesque and Ruskinian background, Atget's images of Versailles could provide him with a non-classical approach capable of reconciling classicism and romanticism.

Significantly, this approach to Versailles and its links with Atget is continued in his later visits between 1912 and 1916. This is the case of photographs such as FLC L4-19-57-001 and FLC L4-19-51-001 (fig. 136, 137), where the perspective of the south wing of the palace is partially hidden behind the central body, the unlikely viewpoint suggesting a viewer in motion; or the case of watercolors such as FLC 2467 (fig. 138), where the oblique view taken from the upper intermediate landing of the One Hundred Steps enfeebles the perception of the orthogonal layout, and where the depth relationships between the volumes and planes beyond the parterre of the orangerie are extended by the steps in the foreground, instilling a sense of discovery in the viewer.<sup>88</sup>

In these later visits, Jeanneret insistently portrayed the orthogonal layout of Versailles in angular perspectives, never depicting the infinity of Le Nôtre's axes or the

<sup>87</sup> See Hambourg, "Structure of the Work."

<sup>88</sup> This watercolor was later dated 1909 by Le Corbusier. This was most probably a mistake, as the similarities with the watercolors FLC 4087-R and FLC 1919—dated 1912—suggest.

I have explored the connections between Jeanneret's photographs and Atget's work elsewhere. Based on the dates of the Fondation Le Corbusier archive, I discussed these images as having been taken by Jeanneret in 1909. In his acute study of Le Corbusier's cameras and photographs, Tim Benton has recently shown that, with the exception of the image FLC L4-19-53-001 (fig. 128), the remaining existing photographs of Versailles were taken between 1912 and 1916. Nevertheless, I believe that my main argument—that Atget provided Jeanneret with a mediating structure between his Romantic education and the classicism of Versailles—remains unchallenged; and as I try to show here, it can be traced back to 1909. See Rabaça, "Le Corbusier, Atget, and Versailles," *Joelho* no. 3 (April 2012): 157-166; Benton, *Secret Photographer*, 7-159.





**FIG. 136** Jeanneret. Versailles. South wing seen from the west parterre. Between 1912-1916.

**FIG. 137** Jeanneret. Versailles. South wing, pool and statue. Between 1912-1916.

**FIG. 138** Jeanneret. Versailles. Orangerie and One Hundred Steps. Between 1912-1916.



palace's symmetrical composition. Scale and spatial depth remained his main concern, in which one senses the feeling of prospect and unfolding discovery, suggesting that Jeanneret looked at Versailles as a built landscape to be experienced in terms similar to those he used to draw back home.

## 4 GERMANY, 1910-1911

The period that Jeanneret spent in Germany meant the consolidation and clarification of many of the concepts and ideas he had been nurturing and the acquisition of new aesthetic values that would be crucial to the journey to the East and to Le Corbusier's later work.

After some sixteen months working with Perret, Jeanneret left the office on November 9, 1909. He intended to spend one more month studying in museums before leaving Paris. He finally set off on December 6 to spend Christmas in La Chaux-de-Fonds. Probably influenced by L'Eplattenier during their trip to England a few months before, he seemed decided to complete the course of study his master had traced for him. He planned to spend some time working with his schoolmates of the art school and then to depart for Germany to complete his technical education working with an engineer.<sup>1</sup>

After the sojourn in his home town Jeanneret left for Munich in April 1910, remaining in Germany until May 1911, when he departed for the *voyage d'Orient*. The focus on technique started to fade immediately after the arrival, when he confessed his intention to rather seek a job in the office of an architect, preferably working with reinforced concrete; and like in Paris, he would soon dive into the libraries of Munich, this time focusing on town planning and German contemporary architecture.<sup>2</sup>

The German stay can be divided into three main periods, broadly corresponding to three main activities. The first one corresponds to his stay in Munich between April and October 1910. It was marked by a trip to Berlin in June and interrupted to spend the summer at home. Before the departure to Munich new decisive plans had emerged. L'Eplattenier had been invited to present a paper on "L'esthétique des villes" at the Congrès des Villes Suisses to be held in September 1910 in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

<sup>1</sup> On the interlude in La Chaux-de-Fonds see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 185-208. The most comprehensive accounts of the German sojourn are Rosario De Simone, *Ch. E. Jeanneret – Le Corbusier: viaggio in Germania 1910-1911* (Rome: Officina Edizione, 1989); Brooks, *Formative Years*, 209- 253. In addition see Mateo Kries, ed. *Le Corbusier: A Study of the Decorative Art Movement in Germany*, trans. Alex T. Anderson (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2008); Oechslin, "Allemagne. Influences, confluences et reniements," in *Encyclopedie*, 33-39; Marco De Michelis, "Modernity and Reform, Heinrich Tessenow and the Institute Dalcroze at Hellerau," *Perspecta*, vol. 26, *Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture* (1990): 143-170; Passanti, "Architecture," 82-85. Jeanneret's German sketchbooks were published in Gresleri, ed., *Le Corbusier (Ch.-E. Jeanneret), Les Voyages d'Allemagne, Carnets* (Milan: Electa and Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 1994), hereafter cited as Jeanneret, *Allemagne Carnets*.

<sup>2</sup> Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 April 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 209; Jeanneret to parents, 18 April, 8 and 16 May 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:301, 305- 306. The letter to L'Eplattenier reads: "Au fait je devrai vous dire que mon plan d'attaque se modifie un peu. Je veux plutôt pendant 3 ou 4 mois travailler chez un architecte (si possible faisant le béton armé) ..."

He asked Jeanneret to make some research and proposed to co-sign a booklet with him on urban design. The aim was to contribute to the improvement of La Chaux-de-Fonds' urban design, drawing inspiration from Camillo Sitte's *Der Städtebau*. For that he lent Jeanneret Camille Martin's French translation of Sitte's book.<sup>3</sup> This research would remain very much alive during the German period, constituting Jeanneret's main activity until October 1910. It amounted to Jeanneret's debut in town planning, materialized in an unfinished manuscript titled "La Construction des villes."<sup>4</sup>

The second period goes from November 1, 1910 to April 1, 1911, when Jeanneret worked in Peter Behrens' office, in Neu-Babelsberg, a garden-city near Berlin. At the theoretical level, this meant an immersion in contemporary German aesthetic theories and their Hellenizing leanings. At the practical level, it meant the acquisition of the required tools to translate the theoretical discourse into architectural practice. Jeanneret further benefited from a broader cultural debate within the office, which awoke or strengthened some of his interests, such as that for theatre or for the work of the sculptor Aristide Maillol.<sup>5</sup>

The last period covers April and May 1911. When Jeanneret left Behrens's office he had already decided to undertake his *voyage d'Orient*. Before that he had to conclude a last task. Early in May 1910 L'Eplattenier had arranged for the art school to provide him with a scholarship to write a report on the applied arts in Germany. Titled *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne*, it would be published in 1912.<sup>6</sup> It was meant to focus on "everything that concerns professional training, the organization of the art trades, the creation, fabrication and sale of artistic productions."<sup>7</sup> The interest in German art schools and their coordination with industry and commerce was part of L'Eplattenier's strategy to promote didactic reforms in the School of Arts and bring La

3 Camillo Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (1899); Camille Martin, *L'Art de bâtir les villes: notes et réflexions d'un architecte* (Geneva: Atar and Paris: Renouard, 1902). For an English translation see Sitte, *City Planning according to artistic principles*, published in George R. Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins, *Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), hereafter cited as Sitte, *City Planning*. This translation includes an additional chapter on streets by Martin, hereafter cited as Martin, "Streets."

4 The manuscript and its Sittesque background were first discussed in Brooks, "Jeanneret and Sitte: Le Corbusier's Earliest Ideas on Urban Design," in Helen Searing, ed., *In Search of Modern Architecture: A Tribute to Henry Russel Hitchcock* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1982), 278-297. The theme was retaken in his *Formative Years*, 201-208. For a discussion on the influence of Sitte and his followers in Le Corbusier's architectural promenade see Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 106-112. For a recent work on and transcript of the manuscript see Christoph Schnoor, *Le Corbusier, La Construction des Villes, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret's erstes städtebauliches Traktat von 1910/1911* (Zurich: Gta Verlag, 2007). A less comprehensive transcript can be found in Emery, *Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, La Construction des villes: genèse et devenir d'un ouvrage écrit de 1910 à 1915 et laissé inachevé* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1992). From Emery see also "Premières réflexions: le manuscrit inédit de 'La Construction des villes,'" in *Encyclopédie*, 432-35. For the manuscript I will follow Schnoor's transcription, hereafter cited as Jeanneret, "Construction des villes."

5 See Passanti, "Architecture," 83-85.

6 Jeanneret, *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne* (La Chaux-de-Fonds: Haefeli et Cie, 1912). An English translation was recently published in Kries, *Decorative Art Movement*, hereafter cited as Jeanneret, *Study*.

7 Jeanneret, *Study*, 141.

Chaux-de-Fonds into the European artistic scene.<sup>8</sup> The scholarship allowed Jeanneret to visit several art schools across the country, and also to study several German city centers discussed in Sitte's book: "you could include notes on all that concerns art in the city and in architecture—in brief, on all that might promote the development of art and beauty here in our country."<sup>9</sup>

Beyond Behrens, his readings, and the general contact with German culture, contacts with four people were of great importance for the purpose of this work, those with William Ritter, August Klipstein, Adolphe Appia and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. Ritter was a painter, writer and art critic Jeanneret got acquainted with through L'Eplattenier early in May 1910, in Munich.<sup>10</sup> Klipstein was a student of art history under Wilhelm Worringer. The friendship with him began on June 28, 1910, the day after Jeanneret's return from his first trip to Berlin. Eleven months later they would both undertake the trip to the East.<sup>11</sup> Lastly, Appia and Dalcroze, well known figures of the Swiss cultural milieu and, like Ritter, sympathizers of the French-speaking Swiss movement. Jeanneret had personally met Appia in Paris.<sup>12</sup> As for Dalcroze, he had written a long musical repertoire inspired by the "Suisse-romande" regional culture that Jeanneret was well acquainted with. Jeanneret was also familiar with Eurythmics,

**8** In 1910 L'Eplattenier proposed the autonomy of the Cours Supérieur from the School of Arts by creating the Nouvelle Section, later founded in June 1911. Jeanneret and his schoolmates Léon Perrin and Georges Aubert taught there for three years, during which it was open. De Simone has noted that the itineraries and collaborations of these former students of L'Eplattenier provide evidence that a carefully planned education abroad was part of L'Eplattenier's strategy for a didactical reform: Aubert had benefited from a scholarship in Paris; Perrin had travelled to north Italy and Vienna with Jeanneret, then Paris, where he attended l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts and worked with Hector Guimard; after Italy, Vienna and Paris, Jeanneret was now finally accomplishing L'Eplattenier's wish for him to further develop his studies in Germany.

The reforms envisaged by L'Eplattenier aimed at answering to the crisis of La Chaux-de-Fonds's watch making industry in two ways: by broadening the field of work beyond the watch making industry, embracing a wider range of arts - such as in the cases of Victor Prouvé's École de Nancy or Charles Rennie Mackintosh's School of Glasgow; and by promoting a new collaboration between art and industry, following the example of the Austrian and German experiences in the field of the applied arts, such as in the case of the *Wiener Werkstätte*, *Deutschen Werkstätten* and *Vereinigten Werkstätten*. Concerning the Vienna sojourn, De Simone has noted the similarities between the organization of the laboratories founded in 1903 by Joseph Hoffmann and the *Ateliers d'Art Réunis* founded by L'Eplattenier's collaborators in 1910. See De Simone, *Viaggio in Germania*, 27-46.

**9** Jeanneret, *Study*, 141.

**10** Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 April, 19/30 May 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 210, 220. On Ritter, his friendship with Jeanneret and influence in his writings and drawings see Dumont, "William Ritter, inspirateur caché du Voyage d'Orient," in *L'Invention d'un architecte*, 48-65; Schnoor, "'Soyez de votre temps' – William Ritter et Le Corbusier," in *Le Corbusier, La Suisse, Les Suisses*, XIIIe Rencontre de la Fondation Le Corbusier (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, Édition de la Villette, 2006), 104-127; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 217-218; Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*, 26-31; idem, "Ritter (William)" in *Encyclopédie*, 349-350; Passanti, "Vernacular," 438-451; Eleanor Gregh, "The Dom-ino Idea," *Oppositions* no. 15-16, (Winter/Spring 1979): 81n29; Le Corbusier, *Ceuvre complète*, 1:12. Jeanneret's correspondence with Ritter is at the Schweizerische Landsbibliothek in Bern. Copies are available at the Bibliothèque de la ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds and at the Fondation Le Corbusier.

**11** Jeanneret to parents, 29 June 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:312. For further details on Klipstein see Gresleri, *Le Corbusier, Viaggio in Oriente: Gli inediti di Charles-Edouard Jeanneret fotografo e scrittore*, 2nd ed. (Venezia: Marsilio, 1985), 24-26.

**12** Jeanneret to parents, 28 October 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:326.

Dalcroze's musical teaching method. During the German sojourn he would establish personal contacts with both through his brother Albert, who had moved near Dresden in October 1910 to participate in Dalcroze's school of gymnastics at the garden-city of Hellerau. Through them he made acquaintance with Heinrich Tessenow and the Hellerau experiments in urban design and educational reform.<sup>13</sup>

Half way through the Munich period, Jeanneret spent two weeks in Berlin. In one of his visits to Ritter in early June he had heard about an exhibition on town planning to be held in Berlin—the *Städtebauausstellung*—presenting the results of the Grand Berlin competition.<sup>14</sup> Jeanneret set off to Berlin on the 8th or 9th: in the first days he attended the annual congress of the Deutsche Werkbund and the Ton-Kalk-Zement exhibition organized by Behrens, both focusing on industrial building materials and techniques and their implications on architectural form; participated in a tour of the AEG buildings (which, among others, included the AEG Turbinenfabrik) and the presentation of their products; went to a reception at Hermann Muthesius's home (closing the congress) by the end of which he had made personal contact with Muthesius and other key figures of the German Werkbund, such as Behrens, Bruno Paul, Hermann Jansen or Wolf Dohrn. He became interested enough in German architecture to think about working with some of its major figures.<sup>15</sup> The second week was devoted to garden cities, museums and several exhibitions, such as that of the Vereinigte Werkstätten and the spring Berlin Secession exhibition. All these experiences positively focused him on the problems of architecture, industrialization, mass production, and their implications on the debate of traditional and modern design. At the level of town planning, Jeanneret acquired a broader view over the problems of the modern metropolis and strategies of urban growth, which he could compare with the Sittesque discourse on medieval town centers.<sup>16</sup> These two weeks in Berlin led to his decisive turn to clas-

13 For Jeanneret's early acquaintance with Dalcroze's musical repertoire inspired in the "Suisse-romande" see Jeanneret to Parents, 11 February 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:158. As for Eurythmics, his brother Albert was encouraged by Dalcroze to dedicate himself to his discipline early in 1905. See De Michelis, "Modernity and Reform," 145.

14 Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 2 June 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 221.

15 "J'ai été voir Peter Behrens, Muthesius et Bruno Paul. J'aimerais faire un stage chez le 1<sup>er</sup> et chez le dernier. Puis faire un stage encore chez Jansen l'arch. de villes, qui a été primé au concours pour Gross-Berlin." Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 27 June 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 224.

16 In the trip Jeanneret visited, sketched, and photographed several medieval towns: Nuremberg and Ratisbon in route to Berlin, and on the way back Wittenberg, Halle, Naumburg, Weimar—visiting the Art School directed by Henry van de Velde—Jena, Coburg, Lichenfels, Würzburg, Rothenburg, Bamberg and Augsburg. De Simone has noted that these visits correspond almost exclusively to urban centers representing the urban character of the traditional German cities—in its majority discussed in Sitte's book as examples of the "art of building cities"—the sketches and annotations confirming the interest in the Sittesque themes: that of the enclosed town square and the importance of the points of view offered in the town square towards the main building; the perception of dimensions of the main building in relation to the vacant space and the remaining buildings; the placement of monuments or fountains on medieval town squares. See Simone, *Viaggio in Germania*, 62-88; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 219-223. For Sitte see mainly "The Layout of Public Squares in the North of Europe," chap. 7B in Sitte, *City Planning*, 206-220. In addition, for the trip see Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 27 June 1910,



sical design.<sup>17</sup>

Our immediate task, here, is to show that, rather than constituting a sudden leap, Jeanneret's conversion to classicism during his German sojourn consisted of a gradual process which extends back to Paris. I will do this in the first of the three main sections of this chapter, where I discuss Jeanneret's project for the Ateliers d'art, designed during his short stay in La Chaux-de-Fonds in the winter 1909-1910, before leaving for Germany. This will provide us with a portrait of his intellectual background at the moment when he arrived in Germany. I will then examine some aspects of the manuscript of "La Construction des villes" suggesting that, through the Sittesque discourse on town planning, Jeanneret incorporated new aesthetic categories into the Romantic framework of his education. Lastly, I will address the contribution of men like Ritter, Appia or Dalcroze in helping Jeanneret to expand the concerns with urban space to a larger view of the experience of the natural and the manmade.

### THE DESIGN FOR THE ATELIERS D'ART: THE "PRIMITIVE" AND THE CLASSICAL

The most significant episode of the short sojourn in La Chaux-de-Fonds is Jeanneret's project for Les Ateliers d'art réunis. Before his return from Paris L'Eplattenier had decided to establish Les Ateliers d'art, a formal organization which was to involve the old students of the Cours Supérieur, aiming at the promotion of the several branches of artistic activity taught in the Cours. As a productive organization it would employ the students he had taught, while the sales of the products would assure its economic self sufficiency. A new building was required for this purpose, and by the end of January 1910 Jeanneret proposed a design for it (fig. 139). The two level building has a pyramidal form resulting from the juxtaposition of simple volumes. On the lower level, the cubical workshops are grouped in the peripheral area separated from each other by small gardens. At the centre is a square lecture hall developing vertically, devoted to teaching drawing theory to the apprentices. On the upper level, developing

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...

repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 223-24; Jeanneret to Ritter, 17 and 21 June 1910; Jeanneret to parents, 13, 21 and 29 June 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:310-18.

17 As Passanti has put it, in Berlin Jeanneret "confirmed what he could see in architectural magazines, the dominance of classicism among the top German architects," while at a broader level, the involvement of industry within architectural production and town planning meant a shift "from creativity in detail to organization of the whole" and another "from small to large, from details to systems, from decorator to architect" in which "classicism provided the means for conceptualizing and controlling the new scale." Passanti, "Architecture," 82-83.

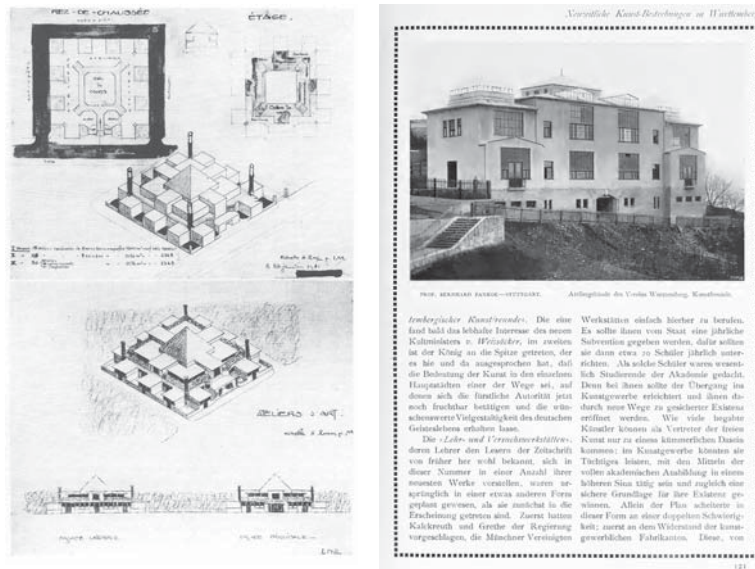


FIG. 139 Jeanneret. Project for Les Ateliers d'art réunis, 1910.  
 FIG. 140 Bernhard Pankok. Stuttgart. Atelier building for the Verein Württemberger Kunstfreunde, 1906. Page from *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*.

around the central hall and with a view over it, are the salesroom, exhibition areas, the architects' drafting tables and offices, surrounded by a roof garden.<sup>18</sup>

The problem raised by this project is its striking classical design. Although having been exposed to Classicism in Paris, Jeanneret still looked at it hesitantly through Romantic categories. Therefore, the design could hardly constitute an intentional classical statement at that time. The first answer for this puzzling contradiction has come from the programmatic arrangement. Fanelli and Gargiani have explained the classicist form through the centrality of the plan. Accepting the programmatic justification—which also responded to the possibility of successive building campaigns as need arose—Passanti has seen Jeanneret's design as a diagrammatic embodiment of a functional concept rather than a classicist monumental statement; as for form, he has suggested a utilitarian purpose for the pyramid at the top, probably meant to be made up of glass to create a skylight over the central court, such as commonly used in banks and post offices. Jeanneret knew this standard skylight, Passanti adds, having most likely taken its design from Bernhard Pankok's 1906 Atelier building for the Verein Württemberger Kunstfreunde, in Stuttgart, which had been recently published in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (fig. 140).<sup>19</sup>

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Four additional keys to unlocking Jeanneret's design have been suggested by Brooks. The first is Behrens's 1905 Music Pavilion for the Oldenburg exposition, which Jeanneret had mentioned in a 1908 letter to L'Eplattenier (fig. 141). The second is

18 Le Corbusier, *Ceuvre complète*, 1: 22. In addition see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 196-200.

19 Fanelli and Gargiani, *Confronti*, 29-30; Passanti, "Architecture," 289n45. For Pankok's project see *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* XX, (1907): 120-127. Passanti has noted that the *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* was available to Jeanneret in the library of the school of arts and that the "Egyptian" flaring cornice adopted by Jeanneret provides further evidence of Pankok's influence.

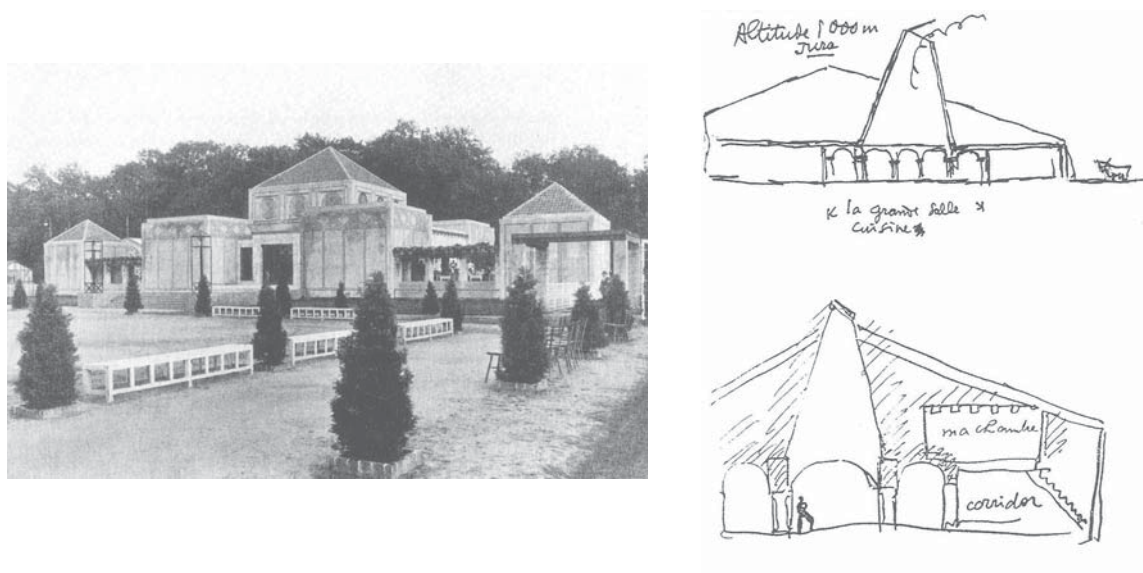


FIG. 141 Peter Behrens. Oldenburg. Music Pavilion, 1905.  
 FIG. 142 Jeanneret. Typical farmhouse of the Jura. Cross-section.

Provencal's discussion of the perfect and universal value of cubic forms in architecture, the play of volume and void, of light and shade. Turner had first advanced this association, and compared the overall volumetric composition to a blown-up version of the bracket-detail of the Villa Fallet. The third key, first advanced by Serenyi, is the monastery of Ema, the cells and central cloister of which explain the rhythmic volumes of the workshops interspersed by private gardens and the arrangement around the central covered space with a communal function. Lastly, a less obvious key is to be found in the Turkish mosque, with its juxtaposition of simple volumes added to a central dome and minarets rising at the corners—here evoked by the four chimneys.<sup>20</sup>

One might take these references one step further by adding the roof gardens of Perret's apartment houses and, more importantly, the Jura farmhouse. About one month after his arrival in La Chaux-de-Fonds, on January 6, 1910, Jeanneret moved into a room in a typical Jura farmhouse on the slopes of Mont Cornu overlooking La Chaux-de-Fonds. The idea of retreat and of a "return to nature" was not alien to his praise for the local farmhouse type. He stayed there for some three months joining some of his schoolmates. The influence of this vernacular type in Le Corbusier's work has been discussed by Brooks, who called attention to the central room—*chambre du tué*—with its huge chimney and pyramidal section cut off diagonally at the top, serving as kitchen and communal gathering place (fig. 142). Brooks has found a repeated expression of this room in Le Corbusier's designs for collective spaces of assembly, from the 1929 project for the Tremblay church, to the Assembly Chamber at Chandi-

<sup>20</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 197; Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 71; Serenyi, "Monastery of Ema," 279-80. In addition see Oechslin, "Allemagne," 38-39. For the 1908 letter see Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 29 February 1908, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 134.

garh and the church at Firminy.<sup>21</sup> It seems reasonable to see in the central space of the Ateliers d'art an early expression of this lingering model and its underlying association with a collective program, symbolic dimension, and pyramidal form of space.

All in all, there are two ways to approach Jeanneret's design, one through the functional inner arrangement and the other through form. Regarding the former, there is evidence of the diagrammatic embodiment of the functional concept. Equally plausible are the influences of the central room of the Jura farmhouse or of the cloister of the Monastery of Ema upon the central court, acting as a central element ordering the hierarchical arrangement while expressing a collective ideal. As for form there is also no doubt about the references mentioned above.

And yet, none of these instructive references point to an intentional overall pyramidal form, the correspondence between interior and exterior, and consistent coordination of form and function. Noting, on the one hand, the classicism and simple geometric forms of this design and, on the other hand, Jeanneret's medievalist leanings and his negative comments about Behrens in 1908, Brooks suggests that, although certainly more favorably inclined toward Behrens than in 1908, Jeanneret's design was conceived as a kind of architectural joke to L'Eplattenier and that only later he perceived certain of its values. This would explain why he published it later in the first volume of *Œuvre complète*.<sup>22</sup> However, the consistency of the design—be it in the correspondence between inner and outer form or in that between form and function—suggests Jeanneret's serious engagement with the geometric forms of the project.

This attention to the pyramidal form requires a broader discussion, for it implies a significant change in Jeanneret's thought during the Parisian period. The case I would like to make is that, backed by his early interest in "primitive" (Egyptian) ornament and the reading of Schuré, the French sojourn had in many ways provided him with the necessary arguments to revise his 1908 negative view of Behrens's work.

Brooks has argued that Jeanneret showed no interest in contemporary art during the Parisian period. He had nonetheless gradually come to admire Rodin, for instance, while Puvis de Chavannes had become his favorite nineteenth-century artist. A postcard of the *Vie pastorale de Sainte Geneviève* (fig. 143) made part of the décor of his Parisian room, at the same time when Jeanneret was studying and drawing primitive and Greek artifacts at the Parisian museums.<sup>23</sup> This painting shows a simplification of form evolving from naturalistic representation towards a certain primitivism comparable to Piero della Francesca's *Nativity* (*Natività*), which he so much praised (fig. 144). Also

<sup>21</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 185-191; idem., "L'Évolution," 13-31; idem., "Le Corbusier's Formative Years," 27-37.

<sup>22</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 197-199.

<sup>23</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 176.





FIG. 143 Puvis de Chavannes. *Vie pastorale de Sainte Geneviève*, 1879.

FIG. 144 Piero della Francesca. *Nativity*, ca. 1470.

worth noting is the dream-like poetic mood of the painting, suggesting a metaphysical dimension of representation. As for Rodin's work, it was seen by the contemporary critics as being classical in nature. In addition, Jeanneret praised the work of artists like Cézanne and had sought inspiration for his own paintings in French artists who exhibited at the Salon des indépendants.<sup>24</sup> Jeanneret's preferences thus went to major figures of the French art movement variously labeled as Synthetists, neo-Traditionalists, or Symbolists since 1891.<sup>25</sup> These influences resurface in his Parisian watercolors, which seem to be gradually submitted to a reductive process leading from naturalistic and literary expression to the dissolution of firm outlines, combining the suggestion on geometric forms with diffused colored patches rendering a subjective impression (fig. 126, 145-147). Similar approaches may be found in the watercolors made in Germany and in the early phase of the journey to the East. From Paris he wrote on Piero's *Nativity*:

“Dans cette Nativité regardez ... la sérénité et la profonde tranquillité des hommes à

24 “... je marchais ces deux derniers mois derrière les artistes indépendants (c'était un besoin de protestation contre l'enlèvement sépulcral des Salons).” Jeanneret to parents, 23 May 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:263.

25 On Jeanneret and the French discourse on Symbolist painting see Passanti, “Architecture,” 85.





FIG. 145, 146, 147 Jeanneret. Paris. Watercolors. Skyline with Notre-Dame painted from the Hôtel d'Orient, 1908.

droite. Regardez ce terrain, ce geai au bord du toit, ce paysage du fond. Plus j'avance plus je vois que seuls les Italiens ont été des peintres, comme seuls les Français ont été des architectes. Qu'est l'autre peinture à côté de cette clarté, de cette précision de pensée, de cette joie devant toute la nature, de cette soif de couleur, de forme plastique et de taches plastiques. Ces gens-là sont bien les descendants des Étrusques qui ont fait ces peintures du musée de Bologne qui m'avaient fichu une telle secousse dans les dos !"<sup>26</sup>

These comments give continuity to Jeanneret's consideration of nature in painting—such as in the case of the Italian and Viennese laudatory comments on the landscapes in Bellini's and Perugino's works<sup>27</sup>—and remain associated to an evolutionary view of art history and to Schuré's call for a renewed Christianity centered in men and rooted in the pagan understanding of a sacred dimension of nature. But beyond the interest in the mythical landscape of the South, they also reveal a new approach to artistic expression. He speaks of the “clarté” and “précision de pensée,” of the “soif de couleur,” as well as “forme plastique” and “taches plastiques” that Italian painters inherited from the Etruscans. More importantly, Jeanneret ends the comments mentioning Italian architecture: “Si j'allais en Italie, ce serait pour faire une étude raisonnée de la psychologie des œuvres des quattrocentistes, pas tant des tableaux que des quelques

<sup>26</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 9 February 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:248.

<sup>27</sup> On February 11, 1908 Jeanneret commented the Italian landscape he was able to revisit through a painting by Pérugin (the poetry of ineffable blue sky above the Apennines, hot colors and the noble silhouette of the heads of Pérugin's women figures), associating it with the idea of a sacred land and Schuré: “... ces phénomènes de transmission de la pensée à travers des pays entiers, s'observent de nos jours toujours plus nombreux (paraît-il). On devine-là une force inouïe qui va un jour se révéler ; la force qui a fait les miracles des prophètes, des prêtres égyptiens, indoux (sic) ou persans. Schuré le constate comme une force terrible, de plus dangereuses ou d'une influence quasi-divine suivant les cas.” Jeanneret to parents, 11 February 1908, repr. in *ibid.*, 1:150-154. On Bellini see chap. 2, section “The Monastery of Ema.”

villes intactes qui subsistent, Sienne, Florence vue de loin, Pise etc.”<sup>28</sup> On the one hand, the terms used to characterize the painting reflect the influence of the French discourse on Synthetist and Symbolist painting. On the other hand, Jeanneret’s mention of a “psychologie des œuvres des quattrocentistes” in architecture seems to indicate that he was thinking about the Italian architecture of the early Renaissance through one of the major arguments of Symbolism: the correspondence between simple forms and the emotive responses they stir in the beholder.

Viollet-le-Duc, we have seen, had written in his *Entretiens* about the universal dimension of the emotive response to art. Similar arguments, associated with the praise for simple forms bearing meaning, were held by the discourse on symbolist art. Passanti has discussed this influence through Maurice Denis’s writings, a Symbolist painter and one of the major critics of the movement.<sup>29</sup> Significantly, Rodin and Puvis de Chavannes are repeatedly mentioned by Denis, who partly built his symbolist theory upon the latter. Being an avid reader on issues central to Symbolist art, and having met Denis personally, we might well expect to find Denis’s essays among Jeanneret’s Parisian readings, specifically those on Puvis de Chavannes and Rodin.<sup>30</sup> While the link with primitive art had become a common place within contemporary aesthetics, in one of his articles Denis had compared Chavannes to the fourteenth and fifteenth-century painters, whom he considered the “primitives”—an idea that, either through Denis or other sources, seems to have led Jeanneret to look at Piero and his contemporaries as inheritors of the Etruscans.<sup>31</sup> As for the emphasis on plastic form and the prejudice against naturalistic and literary expression, Denis’s asserted that the Impressionist and Symbolist painters had continued the “primitives” in understanding that “a

28 Jeanneret to parents, 9 February 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:249.

29 Passanti, “Architecture,” 85.

30 Jeanneret had personally met Maurice Denis through Perret during his 1908-1909 Parisian stay. See Jeanneret to Karl Ernst Osthaus, 27 Mars 1912, repr. in Françoise Véry, “La Correspondance Jeanneret-Osthaus,” in *Passé à réaction poétique*, 162–163. Denis writings are gathered in his, *Théories, 1890-1910 : du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique*, 4th ed. (Paris: Rouart et Watelin Éditeurs, 1920). All subsequent citations refer to this edition. Although first published in 1912, Jeanneret had probably access to some of the original editions in Paris and then in Germany. Perhaps by Jeanneret’s request a copy of the first edition was bought to the library of the art school. See no. 52 in the catalogue.

31 “C’est ainsi que les peintres du XIV<sup>e</sup> et du XV<sup>e</sup> siècles, ces Primitifs qui étaient en somme de grossiers décorateurs, ont fait entrer dans les formes les plus parfaites du décor, les plus poétiques concepts ... Les peintres dont je parle pensaient, eux, qu’avant d’être une représentation de nature ou de rêve, un tableau était essentiellement *une surface recouverte de couleurs dans un certain ordre assemblées*. Ils étaient peintres avant tout. Ils préféraient l’expression par le décor, la forme, la couleur, la matière employée à l’expression par le sujet. Ce qu’ils exprimaient, c’était bien leur idéal, leur vision de la vie, leur émotion devant les choses, mais ils ne l’exprimaient que par des moyens pittoresques. Ce fut leur vertu : ils transposaient leurs sensations en Beauté. Dès lors ils pratiquaient – inconsciemment sans doute, et comme tous les Maîtres – ce que des analystes ont appelé depuis la *Déformation subjective* (vieille doctrine de *l’homo additus naturae*, la Nature vue à travers le tempérament), en vue de plus de sincérité, - et la *Déformation objective* pour conformer leurs imaginations aux éternelles lois du décor. C’est en précisant ces idées par des recherches plus schématiques, que les jeunes d’il y a dix ans se préoccupèrent tout spécialement de définir les lois du décor et les lois de l’expression.” Maurice Denis, “A Propos de l’exposition d’A. Séguin” (1895), in *Théories*, 22-23.

painting, before being a representation of anything, is a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a particular order and for the pleasure of the eyes.” This statement was complemented by the belief that “for each emotion, each human thought, there exists a plastic decorative equivalent,” an idea attributed by Denis to Chavannes.<sup>32</sup> In associating the plastic quality of Piero’s painting with Italian architecture, then, Jeanneret was seemingly thinking about architecture through the Symbolist discourse on form, that is, in terms of the non-literal, evocative qualities of form itself.

It need hardly be remembered that another key issue of Impressionist and Symbolist painting was light, with particular emphasis on that of the south. The association between light and plastic form was available to Jeanneret through various sources. An example in Denis’s writings is the quotation from Vasari opening the “Préface à la IXe exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes”:

“Il ne fut pas de ceux qui pensent que les choses doivent être d’autant plus agréable aux yeux qu’elles ont plus de relief, ce qui attire aisément la majeure partie des hommes, - mais de ceux qui peignent d’une façon égale, en abattant les lumières et les ombres des figures, et expriment avec une belle dextérité les concepts de l’intelligence.”<sup>33</sup>

Another example is the poem “Proposition sur la lumière,” by the symbolist poet Claudel, which Jeanneret read in Paris. Here Claudel writes that light becomes palpable only when it interacts with matter, for example when it goes through a prism.<sup>34</sup>

Jeanneret was thus aware of the Symbolist discourse on form, light, and symbolic dimension, and was starting to look at architecture through it. Several factors further contributed to this change. He was being exposed to classicism in Perret’s office, and later in Versailles, and had studied Corroyer and his theories on the Romanesque compositional principles based on the assembling of simple forms. According to Corroyer’s exposition of an evolutionary architectural history, the simple forms of medieval art were a legacy of ancient art, the archetype of which was, according to Schuré, the Egyptian pyramid. All this paved the way for Jeanneret’s interest in formal simplicity

32 “Il n’est pas douteux qu’il y a des correspondances en quelque sorte fatales, entre les formes, les harmonies de lignes et de couleurs, et d’autre part nos émotions. ‘Pour toutes les idées claires, disait Puvis de Chavannes, il existe une pensée plastique qui les traduit.’ Admirable affirmation du symbolisme ! Dégager cette pensée plastique, découvrir ces correspondances, c’est là toute l’œuvre d’art, c’est le secret du style.” Denis, “L’Esthétique de Beuron” (1905), in *Théories*, 185. In addition see idem, Denis, “Préface à la IXe exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes” (1895), in *Théories*, 26-27; Passanti, “Architecture,” 85, from whom I borrow the English translation of these two quotations.

33 Denis, “Préface,” 25. Other discussions on this subject can be easily found. See, for instance, his essay “Cézanne,” in *Théories*, 245-261.

34 Some quotations read: “... le rayon libre et direct demeure invarié ; la couleur apparaît, dès que la matière assume une fonction propre ; le prisme, dans l’écartement calculé de ses trois angles et le concert de son triple miroir diédrique, enclôt tout le jeu possible de la réflexion et restitue à la lumière son équivalent coloré ...” ; “Ce que l’on a mesuré n’est point la vitesse de la lumière, mais la résistance seulement que le milieu lui oppose, en la transformant.” Claudel, “Proposition sur la lumière,” in *Connaissance de l’est*. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Jeanneret read this book in Paris.

and its symbolic content. In short, he had started to abandon his medievalist leanings and embrace Classicism indirectly through Schuré and Denis.<sup>35</sup>

When Jeanneret arrived in La Chaux-de-Fonds in December 1909, he found L'Eplattenier reading with enthusiasm the book *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, by the early Romantic philosopher Victor Cousin. Later broadened and popularized by Blanc, Cousin had imported the recent German aesthetic theories into France.<sup>36</sup> Through him, Jeanneret could clarify the German roots of much of the ideas he had inherited from Blanc, Provensal, or Schuré, from the Hegelian discourse on abstract form and its symbolic content to the discourse on the Sublime and infinity, the synthesis of spirit and matter, or the idea that God is revealed to men either through “pure thought” and ecstasy or through the sensorial perception of nature and art. Beyond underscoring Provensal’s emphasis on the Hegelian combination of solids and voids made visible by light, L'Eplattenier’s interest in Cousin indicates once more that he had incorporated many of these views and considered them important to Jeanneret’s education. This suggests that L'Eplattenier shared Jeanneret’s commitment with the “primitive” quality of the pyramidal composition of the project for Les Ateliers d’art.

From this perspective, the design for Les Ateliers d’art can be seen as the conflation of all these discourses and Schuré, for Jeanneret was now capable of contextualizing the symbolist nature of Schuré’s discussion of geometry and symbol and his search for reconnecting with a primitive original quality. On this assumption, it seems reasonable to argue that Jeanneret’s design constitutes the serious rehearsal of a new approach to “primitive” form and symbolism. Jeanneret genuinely drew the Ateliers as an ideal architectural solution, so to speak, synthesizing all those references mentioned by Brooks, Fanelli and Gargiani, and Passanti within Schuré’s symbol of the Absolute: “Le triangle superposé au carré et aboutissant à la pointe.”<sup>37</sup> And in accepting that the

35 Schuré, we have seen, belongs to the Symbolist strand, sharing the belief in a symbolic dimension of form and urge to renew art and Christianity. Insofar the similarities in their approach to Egyptian art is concerned it is worth quoting Denis: “Je voudrais que le nom de Primitifs s’appliquât exclusivement aux artistes qui surent, dans le temps de la naissance et de l’enfance des Arts, allier avec le plus de naturel le sentiment de la Beauté et le *sens des objets*; - à ceux qui, encore habitués à se satisfaire de la reconnaissance pratique des choses telles que l’exigent les nécessités de la lutte pour la vie, s’employèrent à en tirer les premiers l’élément d’une émotion esthétique ... Ainsi les Égyptiens, d’abord pénétrés du sens de la réalité (art de l’Ancien Empire), l’enveloppent, dans la suite, d’un système de formules, d’ailleurs admirables, imposés par la religion et l’architecture; et le sens des objets disparaît avec le progrès de la culture et le raffinement de la sensibilité: leur art devient hiéroglyphique.” Denis, “De la gaucherie des primitives (1904), in *Théories*, 173.

36 Victor Cousin, *Du Vrai, du beau et du bien* (Paris, 1904). First published in 1836. Citations refer to the sixth edition (Paris: Didier et C<sup>e</sup>, 1872). On L'Eplattenier’s enthusiasm for the book see Dumont, *Le Corbusier: Lettres à Charles L'Eplattenier*, 212n2. For a brief comment on its content see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 82-83. On Cousin, Blanc and German aesthetics see Passanti, “Architecture,” 290n61. Jeanneret would read Cousin in Germany, though he certainly discussed the book with L'Eplattenier during his stay. On April 16, just after arriving in Munich, Jeanneret asked L'Eplattenier the complete title of the book. Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 April 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 212. According to Turner he inscribed the date of May 1910 in it.

37 “Le triangle superposé au carré et aboutissant à la pointe est (dans la tradition occulte) le signe trinitaire de la vie superposé au signe quaternaire de l’univers et de ses quatre éléments. Par les quatre faces de la pyramide, le triangle se

central space of the project resonate with the *chambre du tué* of the Jura farmhouse, one may look at the *chambre* not only as a model for a communal space, but also as a formal reference embodying the symbolic meaning of Schuré's pyramid.

Like in his early period at the school of arts, for Jeanneret Egypt remained primitive, not Classical. In this sense, the design for Les Ateliers d'art substantiates Jeanneret's gradual adherence to classicism through the notion of primitive. This attitude will continue through his stay in Germany, where Classicism will remain essentially framed by an idealist conception of the Mediterranean world, the simple geometrical forms of its architecture, and symbolic dimension.<sup>38</sup>

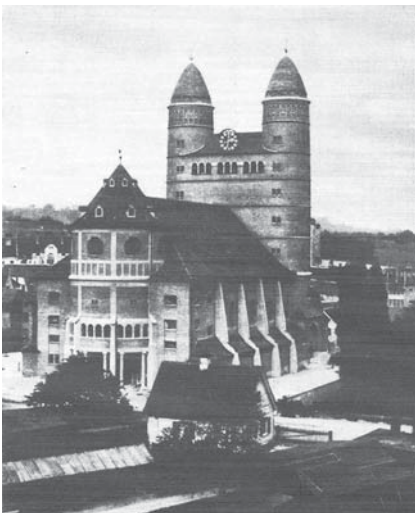
The idealist and formal quality of this architectural exercise and the theories of an evolutionary history provide us with Jeanneret's intellectual context when he arrived in Germany. In accepting that the project for Les Ateliers d'art meant a search for the primitive and the "absolute" through a geometric composition exploring variety within unity, it follows that, more than renewing architecture by fusing tradition and innovation, Jeanneret's endeavor in the early period in Germany was to understand how a new architecture could be built upon an "original" architectural expression. Through the evolutionist historical conception of Corroyer and Schuré, he could look at medieval art as a transition between the "primitive" and the modern; hence, en route to Munich, the interest in buildings such as Robert Curjel and Carl Moser's Lutheran church in Karlsruhe, Theodor Fischer's Gustav Siegle House in Stuttgart, the Garrison Church in Ulm, or, already in Munich, Fischer's church of the Redeemer (fig. 148-151).

Also these preferences meant a continuity of Jeanneret's interest in simple forms. While his attention to buildings such as Fischer's Elisabethplatz School (fig. 152) could suggest interest for a new architecture exploring regionalist values—with similarities to the Swiss context—most of them rather indicate Jeanneret's interest in volumetric expression. The significance of cases such as the Garrison church is overtly related with the reconciling of medieval forms and reinforced concrete, which seems to justify Jeanneret's plan to work with an architect building with reinforced concrete rather than with an engineer. And yet, the cylindrical volumes of the towers are easily readable in the overall volume, just as the intersection of the cylinder of the apse and the main body of the church. Looking at these buildings through Corroyer's emphasis on

résorbe dans l'unité divine dont il émane. L'image de l'Absolu ne peut être que géométrique." Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 85-86. Although using the word "projets" in a broad sense, Jeanneret wrote to Max Du Bois a few days after drawing the project, mentioning his faith in "ideal projects" for the future: "L'avenir est superbe pour qui veut vouloir ... Véritables apothéoses de projets purement idéaux caressés avec insistance, bref une vie saie retrouvée; milieu propice à l'éclosion d'art, sain, bonheur et sérénité ..." Jeanneret to Du Bois, 1 February 1910, quoted in Dumont, *Le Corbusier : Lettres à Charles L'Eplattenier*, 201.

<sup>38</sup> In this respect it is worth mentioning Jeanneret's diagrams and annotations on proportional systems used in the Egyptian pyramids. See Jeanneret, *Allemagne Carnets*, 4:[8]10-[9]11.





**FIG. 148** Robert Curjel and Carl Moser. Karlsruhe. Lutheran church, 1905-1906.

**FIG. 149** Theodor Fischer. Stuttgart. Gustav Siegle House, 1910.

**FIG. 150** Theodor Fischer. Ulm. Garrison Church, 1908-1911.

**FIG. 151** Theodor Fischer. Munich. Church of the Redeemer, 1899-1901.

**FIG. 152** Theodor Fischer. Munich. Elisabethplatz School, 1901-1902.



FIG. 153 Behrens. Hagen. Cuno house, 1909-1910.  
 FIG. 154 Behrens. Hagen-Delstern. Crematorium, 1906-1907.

the assembling of simple forms, one cannot help reading them as architectural compositions based on the intersection and juxtaposition of geometric volumes. Particularly interesting in this respect is the church of the Redeemer, which seems to result from the juxtaposition of cubic volumes capped with triangular forms, be it the tower, the transept and side entrance porch, or the stepped front facade. Jeanneret's attempt to work with Fischer just a few days after his arrival in Munich can be well understood in light of his interest both in reinforced concrete and volumetric expression.<sup>39</sup>

In the eyes of Jeanneret, who was probably looking at architectural composition in terms of an assembling of simple forms, cases such as Fischer's church of the Redeemer and Gustav Siegle House were not that distant from much of the contemporary Classical architecture in Germany. From this perspective, the main differences from classicism lied more in surface treatment than in compositional principle. The comparison of the cylindrical volumes of the Garrison church's apse and Behrens's Cuno house is instructive (fig. 153). This seems to explain why, being interested in working with Fischer, he could easily shift to Behrens.

Indeed, beyond the Cuno house, he could look at almost all of Behrens's works as "primitive": the Crematorium in Hagen, with its reference to "Quattrocento primitive" and its composition by elementary forms (fig. 154); the Wiegand house, which Behrens was designing when Jeanneret was in the office, with its "brutal" mass and austere column and slab entry pavilion, resonating with Friedrich Gilly and Friedrich Schinkel (fig. 155); or the AEG Turbinenfabrik, the massive corners bringing to mind the leaning walls of Egyptian temples, while the optical effects of the play of vertical and oblique lines and masses, the long columnar side wall, and the pediment evoke the Greek temple, particularly the Parthenon if one thinks of the oblique approach provided by the corner site (fig. 156).

Having shown the "primitive" quality of Jeanneret's Ateliers d'art and of Beh-

<sup>39</sup> On Jeanneret's interest in working with Fischer see Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 April 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 208-09; Jeanneret to parents, 18 April 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:301-02. In addition, Fischer was also professor of city planning, a follower of Sitte, and a founding member and first president of the Deutscher Werkbund.



FIG. 155 Behrens. Berlin. Wiegand house, 1911-1912.

FIG. 156 Behrens. Berlin. AEG Turbinenfabrik, 1908-1909.

rens's work, we may revisit Brooks's suggestion that the Ateliers were based on Behrens's Music Pavilion for the Oldenburg exposition. In contrast with his 1908 reaction, after Paris Jeanneret may well have admired the Oldenburg pavilion for its "primitive" resonances and simple, symbolic forms. This means that the similarity between both could have been neither accidental nor a joke, but the result of Jeanneret's changing attitude toward aesthetics—a change harking back to the reading of Schuré and to the Parisian period.<sup>40</sup>

In the design for the Ateliers d'art, Jeanneret was thus raising the banner of the primitive and reaching the classical categories through it. If there seems to be evidence that Jeanneret's conversion to classicism in Germany constitutes a gradual change of his aesthetic thinking, the central concept in this process is that of the primitive, associated with formal clarity and density of meaning. The primitive provided him with the mediating structure through which he could embrace classicism, first in Versailles, then in the Ateliers d'art, and finally in his approach to the work of German contemporary architects.

Indeed, while Jeanneret was still ambivalent about classicism when he arrived in Germany, he seems to have resolved his conflicts by November 1910 and January 1911. In November he visited Potsdam and painted *Sans-Souci*, still obliquely but focusing on the architectural axis (fig. 157); and in January he confessed his new leanings to L'Eplattenier:

"Ah mais mois aussi je leur dois une chandelle à ces Stauffifer [Germans] de m'avoir arraché à ma gangue moyen-âgeuse en me révélant ces styles admirables et si parents de nous que déjà j'avais devinés lors de mon séjour à Paris. Je me souviendrai toujours de ce matin plein de fleurs printanières de marronniers neigeux et de lilas nains, qui déploya devant mes yeux le spectacle colossal et inattendu de Versailles. Ce fut l'écroulement de ma mythologie enténébrée et alors rayonna la clarté classique."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> This substantiates and expands De Simone's assessment that Jeanneret's German sojourn had to be looked upon as a continuity of the experience in Perret's office. De Simone, *Viaggio in Germania*, 150-57. Others have a different opinion; cf. Oechslin, "Allemaage", 33-39.

<sup>41</sup> Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 January 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 258. See also Jeanneret to Parents, 21 June





FIG. 157 Jeanneret. Potsdam. Sans-Souci, November 1910.

Germany had provided him with the required tools to finally make peace with the hidden lessons of Versailles.

**THE BOOK ON “LA CONSTRUCTION DES VILLES”:  
VOLUME, SPACE, PERCEPTUAL DYNAMICS AND NARRATIVE.**

Having started to think about town planning through Sitte in La Chaux-de-Fonds, by the time of his arrival in Munich Jeanneret had already a scheme of the subjects to study, probably defined with L’Eplattenier. His initial source, Martin’s French translation of *Der Städtebau*, complements Sitte’s analysis of town squares with a short chapter on streets. Both themes correspond to the two main sections of the second chapter of Jeanneret’s manuscript, “Des Eléments Constructifs de la Ville.” Having had no success in getting a job in Fischer’s office, Jeanneret dived into the libraries of Munich during the first two months, and his readings confirmed Sitte as a leading figure of town planning.<sup>42</sup> His research was gradually complemented by the work of followers of Sitte, such as Paul Schultze-Naumburg’s *Kulturarbeiten*, Henrici’s *Beiträge zur praktischen Ästhetik im Städtebau* or Johann Hubatscheck’s *Die bautechnische Aufgaben einer modernen Stadt*. After the trip to Berlin, where he became aware of the classicist trends in current architecture and where he visited some garden cities, the attention

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...  
1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:311, where he mentions his first visit to Sans-Souci in June 1910.

42 Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, April/May 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 214.

to medieval town centers was expanded to Classical arguments through books such as Brinckmann's *Platz und Monument* and Joseph August Lux's *Der Städtebau und die Grundpfeiler der heimischen Bauweise*.<sup>43</sup>

Heavily dependent upon its bibliographic sources, the manuscript is closer to a series of summaries of Jeanneret's readings than to a formalization of a theory. Broadly speaking, the manuscript can be divided into three major parts. One consists of the sections on streets and town squares, reflecting the view of the city as an artistic enterprise. The second, more eclectic, is constituted by looser sections on several themes, informed by diverse literature. The last one is the chapter on La Chaux-de-Fonds, of minor significance for the purpose of this work.<sup>44</sup> For the perspective that interests us, the most useful sections are those on streets, squares and gardens.

The influence of Sitte on Jeanneret has been amply discussed, concluding that *Der Städtebau* furthered the cause of the picturesque in Jeanneret's debut in urban design.<sup>45</sup> It has also been noted that some of his additional readings align with Jeanneret's conversion to classicism, helping him to connect classicism and modernity.<sup>46</sup> My interest in Jeanneret's readings on town planning is focused on a different issue: how Sitte and his followers provided a bridge for Jeanneret, between the discourse on the picturesque and contemporary German aesthetic theories. Through them, he would focus on space and volume, while recasting the notion of picturesque pictorial tableaux in terms of perceptual dynamics. This is particularly evident in the sections on squares and streets. Based on them, I will further propose that Jeanneret transposed the experiential pattern of the Jura landscape into town planning and that, through this transposition, he thought of the city as a combination of picturesque and classical qualities. Lastly, I will draw attention to Jeanneret's writings on garden design, where, merging these notions with those of geometric order and contemplative landscape, he would further explore the dialectics of picturesque and Sublime. Before discussing

43 Paul Schultze-Naumburg's *Kulturarbeiten* (1901-1917); Karl Henrici, *Beiträge zur praktischen Ästhetik im Städtebau* (1902); Johann Hubatscheck, *Die bautechnische Aufgaben einer modernen Stadt* (1900); Albert Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument : Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Stadtbaukunst in neuerer Zeit* (1908); Joseph August Lux's *Der Städtebau und die Grundpfeiler der heimischen Bauweise* (1908). For a complete bibliography see Schnoor, *Le Corbusier*, 615-617. Schnoor's book is the most comprehensive work on the manuscript. In addition, see his "Munich to Berlin"; for Brinckmann see Passanti, "Architecture," 83.

44 In the summer Jeanneret returned home, where he improved the manuscript and, with the help of his mother, his style of writing. The main body of the manuscript dates from this summer. Brooks has reconstructed the table of contents as it may have existed by this time, broadly corresponding to the order adopted in Schnoor's edition. The sections on streets and town squares are preceded by a section on the layout and parceling of residential lots and followed by another on enclosing walls. To these, by L'Eplattenier's request, Jeanneret added sections on bridges, trees, gardens and parks, cemeteries and garden cities, not always fully developed. These sections are preceded by an introductory chapter discussing general issues, headed "Considérations générales," while the last chapter, "Application critique," is devoted to the specific case of La Chaux-de-Fonds.

45 See Brooks, "Jeanneret and Sitte," 278-297; Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 106-112.

46 Passanti, "Architecture," 83.



Jeanneret's manuscript on town planning, however, it is necessary to briefly mention some aspects of the aesthetic background underlying Jeanneret's renewed approach to form in Germany.

**BACKGROUND: THE GERMAN DISCOURSE ON EMPATHY** The simplicity of architectural forms that Jeanneret encountered in contemporary architecture since his first days in Germany, such as in Fischer and Behrens, is self-evident to anybody looking at those buildings. This emphasis on simple form, in turn, reflects a broader theoretical discourse going from Kant to the late-nineteenth-century theories of *Einfühlung* (empathy).<sup>47</sup> Treating form as independent from meaning, the *Einfühlung* theories focused on the abstract quality of form and how mass and lines endow it with individuality. Regularity, symmetry, proportion, and harmony became key notions of this discourse. Friedrich Vischer had defined these qualities as the “internal moments” of form which secure the individuality through which an object stands out from its surroundings.<sup>48</sup> Through the association of architecture with the abstract nature of music—an association extending back to Friedrich Schiller and Arthur Schopenhauer, which had become commonplace later in the century—rhythm was also raised to a major category of form.

The discourse on *Einfühlung* investigated the psychological mechanism of the perceiver's response to form, extrapolating, for this purpose, from the physiological theories of perception. Robert Vischer (Friedrich Vischer's son), who first used the term *Einfühlung*, argued that “in responding to certain stimuli,” the body “objectifies itself in spatial forms,” it “unconsciously projects its own bodily form—and with this also the soul—into the form of the object.” He thus saw “the rhythmic impression of form” as the “pleasant overall sensation of harmonic series of successful self-motion.”<sup>49</sup> An influential figure within this discourse was Heinrich Wölfflin. Having defined architecture as “the art of corporeal masses,” Wölfflin analyzed the emotional effects

47 On the late-nineteenth-century German theoretical discourse on form see Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonou, eds. and trans., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Research Institute, 1994). For a more comprehensive approach to nineteenth-century German theory in English language see Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995).

48 See Heinrich Wölfflin, “Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture” (1886), in Mallgrave and Ikonou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 162.

49 In this process, the kinesthetic response of the eye mediates between form and emotive response: “The responsive sensation considers only the outline of the form (mountain silhouette) or follows only the path of movement.” It follows that, “to trace the outline of a form [with the eyes] is a self-movement,” a subjective act in which “the apparent movement of form is thus unconsciously accompanied by a concrete emotional element of feeling that is inseparably bound up with the concept of human wholeness.” Robert Vischer, “On the Optical Sense of Form: a Contribution to Aesthetics” (1873), in Mallgrave and Ikonou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 92, 106-107.

of the kinesthetic response of the eye when it traces forms by following their lines.<sup>50</sup> Perception is however a comprehensive bodily process, engaging architecture with the vertical and directional organization of the human body: “Physical forms possess a character only because we ourselves possess a body,” which means that “our bodily organization is the form through which we apprehend everything physical.” The analogy between architectural form and the bodily experience of the perceiver acquires particular expression in the Schopenhauerian contention that the fundamental theme or *Idea* of architecture is the visual balance of *support and burden*, best expressed in the column and entablature system of the Doric temple. For Schopenhauer, this expresses the *will* to overcome gravity; for the *Einfühlung* theorists, the perceiver senses and recognizes this *will* in his own bodily experience.<sup>51</sup>

Wölfflin’s theories and the German discourse on form in general informed the work of architects such as Behrens, which means that, through him, Jeanneret absorbed the aesthetic categories of form–compositional rhythm, proportion, and so forth—from the point of view of the *Einfühlung* theories, that is, of a bodily engaged perception of form: the volumetric expression communicating a mental impression to the perceiver through harmony, proportion and rhythmic ordering of forms and colors.

A second aspect that interests us particularly in the *Einfühlung* theories is the notion of space, within which form is perceived. In the first chapter we mentioned that Semper saw in the “spatial motive” the first impulse and original motive of architecture; and that for him, spatial enclosure is formed by *stringing together uniform segments of space*, that is, is formed by Eurythmy, thus engaging with the vertical and directional organization of the human body (the organic vital force and the *will*). In defining the four “internal moments” of form—regularity, symmetry, proportion and harmony—Friedrich Vischer added two “external moments,” the “limitation of space” and “measure in relation to the intensity of our visual perception.”<sup>52</sup> Robert Vischer wrote on the “spatial understanding of forms,” arguing that the perceptual mechanisms

50 Wölfflin quotes Johannes Volkelt, who, writing on the symbolization of spatial form, argued that spatial form is interpreted in terms of movement. “In visually tracing the outline of things seen, we make the lines flow and run ... To interpret the spatial form aesthetically we have to respond to this movement vicariously through our senses, share in it with our bodily organization ... The extension and movement of our body is associated with a feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which we interpret as the experience characteristic of the form itself.” Wölfflin, “Prolegomena,” 150-53. Note that in the *Einfühlung* theories, the word “symbol” relates to the empathetic process of engagement of the perceiver with the viewed object. On this see Mallgrave and Ikonomou, introduction to *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 42.

51 Wölfflin, “Prolegomena,” esp. 151, 157-158. To the Schopenhauerian idea that will manifests itself in architecture through the opposition between matter and gravity, Wölfflin countered that the living will of matter aspires towards form. (ibid., 159-60). For Schopenhauer see his *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909), 1:275-282, 3: 182-192.

52 See Wölfflin, “Prolegomena,” 162.

of the eye, while scanning the lines of contours and mapping masses, provide the perceiver with the third dimension of space, i.e., depth.<sup>53</sup> Building upon these concerns with the perception of three-dimensionality, figures such as Adolf von Hildebrand and August Schmarsow added the category of space-form to that of volume-form. Space became for them a main aspect of architectural creation, resting on the assumption that space, not mass, is what the eye senses through the experience of movement, be it real or imagined (sensed).<sup>54</sup>

Particularly relevant is Schmarsow's discussion of axis. On one level, "we all carry the dominant coordinate of the axial system within ourselves in the vertical line that runs from head to toe." Architecture—the generator of space—creates "enclosures for us in which the vertical middle axis is not physically present but remains empty." From this standpoint, "the spatial construct is, so to speak, an emanation of the human being present, a projection from within the subject, irrespective of whether we physically place ourselves inside the space or mentally project ourselves into it."<sup>55</sup> On another level, "next to the vertical line ... the most important direction for the actual spatial construct is the direction of free movement—that is, forward—and that of our vision, which, with the placement and positioning of the eyes, defines the dimension of depth." It is through this anthropomorphic system of coordinates that the experience of "the charm of perspective vistas or spatial development" takes place, an experience "which has a serene and liberating effect on our soul, expanding and elevating it." Even as a mental experience, this is a kinesthetic experience:

"The linguistic terms that we use for space, such as 'extension,' 'expanse,' and 'direction,' suggest continuous activity on our part as we transfer our own feeling of movement directly to the static spatial form. We cannot express its relation to ourselves in any way other than by imagining that we are in motion, measuring the length, width, and depth, or by attributing to the static lines, surfaces, and volumes the movement that our eyes and our kinesthetic sensation suggest to us, even though we survey the dimensions while standing still."<sup>56</sup>

For the sake of simplicity, then, one may assert that this German aesthetic discourse rests upon two major categories, volume and space, lived through a bodily-engaged kinesthetic perception.

On the one hand, we have seen that, when Jeanneret arrived in Germany, he was

53 Robert Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form," 93-95.

54 See Mallgrave and Ikonomou, introduction to *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 57-66. For Schmarsow see also Mitchell W. Schwarzer, "The Emergence of Architectural Space: August Schmarsow's Theory of 'Raumgestaltung,'" *Assemblage* no. 15 (Aug. 1991): 48-61.

55 Schmarsow, "The Essence of Architectural Creation" (1893), in Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 288-289.

56 Schmarsow, "Architectural Creation," 289, 291, 293.

already concerned with the clarity of form and a compositional principle expressing variety within unity. The German influence—from Fischer to Klipstein and Behrens—helped him to raise volume to an architectural category.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, the central hall of Les Ateliers d'art seems to indicate an attention to spatial form, possibly triggered by the pyramidal central space of the Jura farmhouses. As I will try to show in the next section, one of the main avenues through which Jeanneret would come to see volume and space as two interconnected architectural categories dynamically experienced would be the German discourse on town planning.

JEANNERET'S CHAPTERS ABOUT SQUARES AND STREETS:  
VOLUME-FORM, SPACE-FORM, AND PERCEPTUAL DYNAMICS

Two passages within the sections of squares and streets of Jeanneret's manuscript provide early indications of Jeanneret's acquisition of new formal concepts. In the first one, about squares, Jeanneret claims that the plastic elements necessary to the beauty of a town square stem from a primordial condition, "la corporalité." A plastic work of art must be concrete, "saisissable aux regards," must have a "character of volume, of a room."<sup>58</sup> In the second passage, about monuments, Jeanneret discusses the abstract plastic nature of monuments, claiming that it pertains to the domain of color, line and

57 A first sign of the influence of Germany came from his personal contact with Fischer. On June 6 he showed Fischer the works of the Cours Supérieur, and Fischer comment was: "intéressant, mais manque d'architecture et de développement normal des formes." See Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 7 June 1910, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 223. Further contributions, Passanti has noted, came from his readings, his acquaintance with Klipstein and, later, through Behrens, with whom he learned how to translate the theoretical discourse on volume, rhythm, and proportion of architectural composition into architectural practice. Passanti, "Architecture," 83-86. On Behrens and the notions of volume and rhythm see also De Simone, *Viaggio in Germania*, 124; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 252. In a letter to L'Eplattenier, Jeanneret wrote: "J'arrivai chez Behrens ne sachant presque pas ce qu'était un style, et ignorant totalement l'art des moulures et de leurs rapports ... Et c'est pourtant de rapports que naît l'harmonieuse forme ... Behrens, sévère, exige la cadence et les rapports subtils et tant de choses qui m'étaient inconnues." Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 January 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 259.

58 The whole passage reads: "Les éléments plastiques indispensables à la beauté d'une place dérivent tous d'une condition primordiale: la corporalité. Nous avons déjà dit (cette vérité de La Palysse [sic.]) qu'une œuvre d'art (plastique) doit être concrète, saisissable aux regards. Or les places du XIX, passées en revue plus haut, n'ont pas de corporalité; tandis que celles de toutes les belles époques, avaient au plus degré le caractère de volume, de chambre. Si la place n'est pas une chambre aux vastes lambris, aux meubles judicieusement placés, aux fenêtres sur les belles perspectives, elle ne peut prétendre à quoi que ce soit de la beauté; telle la rue droite, longue et non fermée, elle est un volume inexistant pour l'œil, par conséquent inexpressif. Sa corporalité se muera en beauté, lorsque le rapport de son plan et des murs qui la bordent accusera une unité de conception, lorsqu'au lieu de mener loin le regard au travers des percées nombreuses et profondes de la surface de ses murs, elle le retiendra en lui offrant le *maximum de façades*, lorsque par une orientation favorable elle participera, entière, à l'embellissement d'un édifice désigné – lorsqu' enfin, par l'addition d'un monument – fontaine, statue etc. – elle ajoutera à l'abstraction des lignes architecturales un sentiment plus intime, plus personnel ..." Jeanneret, "Construction des villes," 338.

The association between this passage and Jeanneret's acquisition of new formal concepts has been pointed out by Passanti, "Architecture," 84, who has noted that the notion of corporality (*Körperlichkeit*) of the German aesthetic discourse was available to Jeanneret through various sources, from his readings to Klipstein, or Behrens, who had written of "the plainly rhythmical" and corporeality as essential qualities of architecture. For the notion of corporality see also Schnoor, *Le Corbusier*, 218-219.

volume, being independent from meaning: “exaltation des couleurs, ou formes jouant en beaux volumes sous les caresses de la lumière, exaltation et beauté qui ne naissent que par des jeux d’équilibre et de rythmes – lesquels plaisent au sens de la vue ...”<sup>59</sup> With these passages in mind, I would like to emphasize three key aspects of Jeanneret’s sections on squares and streets. First, they are informed by two distinct aesthetic categories, which are reflected in each of these passages, that of space-form (the volume of the town square defined by the plan and rhythmic facades) and that of volume-form (the sculptural and architectural volume of monuments within the space), respectively. Second, through his readings on town planning, Jeanneret came to think of their combination and to connect them with the discourse on perceptual dynamics—the perception of form associated to bodily motion. Third, these new formal concepts and theories of perception were gradually accommodated upon his Romantic background.

Discussion of how Jeanneret’s readings on town planning provided a bridge between the picturesque and the German discourse on form must begin with Sitte. Having transposed the Semperian concept of space enclosure to urban design, Sitte awoke Jeanneret’s attention to space while maintaining the discourse about the *sequential tableaux* offered to the beholder as a main parameter of evaluation of town planning.<sup>60</sup> Mainly focusing on the design of medieval town squares, Sitte’s main argument is that a square should be an enclosed entity and its centre should be kept free. The emphasis on space and its temporal experience emerges in a main argument: monuments should be placed at the periphery and the main building should be embedded in the urban fabric, enhanced to the beholder’s sight through its scale and location in relation to the vacant space and access streets. Irregularity played a major role in conveying the sense of spatial enclosure and in hiding the square along the approach from the surrounding streets.

Although the main building of a square may acquire a key role in the articulation

59 “Dans la place publique, le monument est donc un ornement. Mais qu’est-ce que cette chose qu’autrefois on nommait ornement et dont depuis un siècle on a perdu la signification ? Elle est une chose objective, indépendante de toute idée subjective, quelle qu’elle soit ; de ressortant que des trois domaines : de la couleur, de la ligne et du volume. Un ornement est une chose *qui fait bien*, avant que d’exprimer quoi que ce soit, ce qui implique donc des idées d’équilibre – mais non forcément de symétrie – de rythme : exaltation des couleurs, ou formes jouant en beaux volumes sous les caresses de la lumière, exaltation et beauté qui ne naissent que par des jeux d’équilibre et de rythmes – lesquels plaisent au sens de la vue – équilibre de rythme s’unissant suivant une ligne, laquelle, étant le symbolisme effectif de la volonté, plaît à l’esprit -. L’ornement étant créé, soumis dans sa forme aux servitudes du matériau, il peut dès lors évoquer des sentiments, - lesquels plaisent au cœur.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 365-66. On this passage see also Passanti, “Architecture,” 84.

60 Sitte’s praise for Semper’s work is expressed in *Der Städtebau*. See Sitte, *City Planning*, 281, passim. In addition see Collins and Collins, “Camillo Sitte,” 55-56, passim. Space enclosure, let us remember, is also a key notion of some strands of the German discourse on form. Schmarsow’s “intuited form of space” rests on this notion: “Art ... immediately strives to translate the inner intuition into an actual phenomenon—the visible indication, designation, and enclosure of spatial area within a general space.” Schmarsow, “Architectural Creation,” 287.



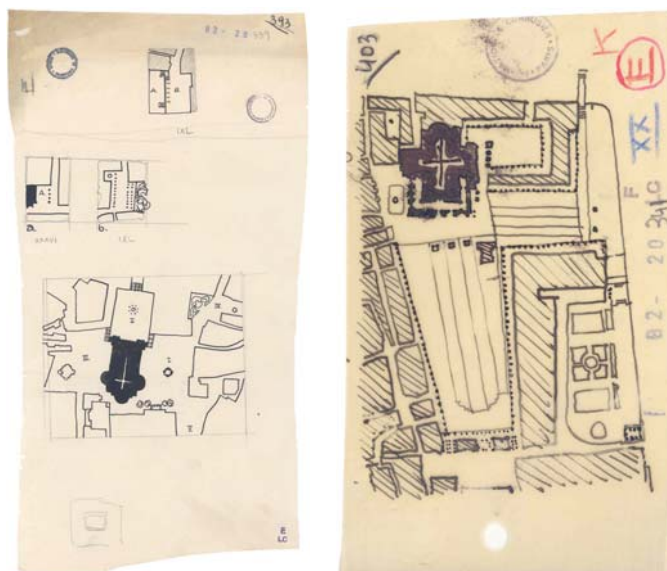


FIG. 158 Jeaanneret. Salzburg. Plaza grouping. Sketch after Sitte, *Der Städtebau*.

FIG. 159 Jeaanneret. Venice. St. Marks square. Sketch after Sitte, *Der Städtebau*.

of urban spaces, that building is never considered as an isolated volume. In the chapter “Plaza Groupings,” Sitte writes about the “exploitation of the beauties of a monumental building” through the arrangement of adjacent squares, offering different “town tableaux,” each one being a different “closed harmonious entity” (fig. 158). Discussing the case of the Piazza S. Marco and the Piazzetta (fig. 159), he concludes that “one should keep in mind the special effect that results from walking about from one plaza to another in such a cleverly grouped sequence.” Jeaanneret would easily recognize here the discourse on the picturesque:

“Visually our frame of reference changes constantly, creating ever new impressions. What wealth of effects these plazas harbor can be judged from ... more than a dozen different photographs ... each taken from another point and each showing another view, so that one can hardly believe them all to be the same plaza.”<sup>61</sup>

Another aspect of Sitte’s book is the analogy between the space of the square and architectural space. Discussing the urban spaces of antiquity, he compares them to architectural spaces such as those of theatres, hypaethral temples, or houses; they are roofless structures in which tragedies and other dramatic performances took place. Invoking Vitruvius, he asserts that the Roman forum is a type of theatre. Used as the stage of gladiatorial shows, Roman forums adapted the Greek models of urban spaces by arranging the colonnades and statues at the periphery of the enclosed space. The forum at Pompeii is presented as the best example, with the central space free and a large quantity of monuments along its edges. It is a roofless, large concert hall with a

61 Sitte, *City Planning*, 192-97.

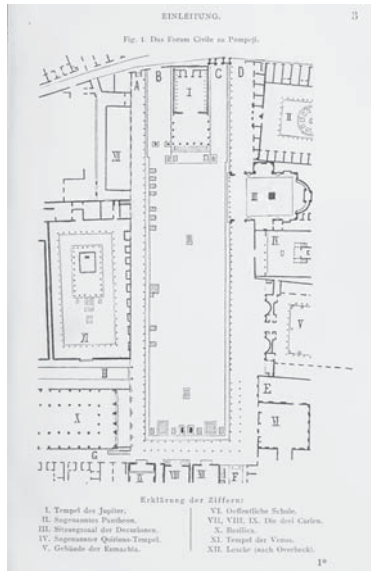


FIG. 160 Pompeii. Forum. Plan. From Sitte, *Der Städtebau*.

FIG. 161 Pompeii. Forum. From Sitte, *Der Städtebau*.

gallery, he argues, a hypaethral assembly hall.<sup>62</sup>

Pompeii is a good example also because it shows how the enclosed space should be experienced. “The decided seclusion of the space also contributes to this impression. Not only are the buildings’ facades in the modern sense set well back, but also the opening of streets into it is much restricted” (fig. 160-161). He proceeds by observing that the streets behind the buildings III, IV, and V do not access the forum, the streets E, F, G, and H were closed with gates, and the ones to the north are filtered by the portals A, B, C, and D. After mentioning the Forum Romanum Sitte concludes: “In short, the forum is for the whole city what the atrium represents in a single-family dwelling: it is the well-appointed and richly furnished main hall. In keeping with this,” he adds, “an unusual quantity of columns, monuments, statues, and other artistic treasures was lavished on this place, too, because it was the intention to create a sumptuous hypaethral interior.”<sup>63</sup>

Jeanneret’s manuscript shows that he fully endorsed Sitte’s ideas, focusing on the enclosure of space defined by the plan and the facades, arguing that just as the impression of a room depends on the way the doors open onto it, so the sense of comfort of a town square depends on the way the streets enter into it. Like Sitte, he uses the Forum at Pompeii as his first example.<sup>64</sup> As Collins and Collins have noted, Sitte looked at urban design as the “arrangement of spaces in appealing and useful patterns and sequences, rather than the division of a site into building blocks separated by traffic

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>64</sup> Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 344-47, *passim*.

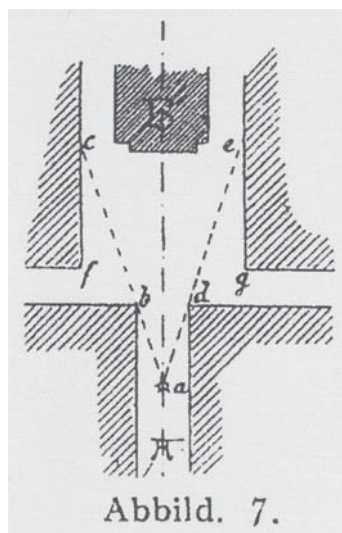


FIG. 162 Square with monumental building. From Henrici, *Beiträge zur praktischen Ästhetik im Städtebau*.

arteries, as in a grid system,”<sup>65</sup> and Jeanneret fully accepted this point of view.

Sitte’s followers shared this attitude. The shift from the customary building blocks to the emphasis on spatial relationships was considered by Sitte’s admirers to be a basic contribution of his book. They “felt that Sitte had made civic art a truly spatial art (*Raumkunst*).”<sup>66</sup> Sitte’s reception was informed by the theories on space of men like Hildebrand or Schmarsow; and this is reflected in the writings of his followers.<sup>67</sup>

An example that Jeanneret took from Henrici, a close follower of Sitte, illustrates the prejudice against a square in which the main building is isolated from the peripheral fabric (fig. 162). Adopting Henrici’s Sittesque view, Jeanneret explains that, in arriving to such a square from an axial street “the effect will be unfortunately missed,” since the approaching pedestrian will not be able to see the side facades of the peripheral buildings; and once in the square he will not be surprised by the main building, which had been visible from the approach along the street. It follows that the main building should be embedded in the urban fabric and enhanced by being higher. In addition, squares should be irregular and the streets should enter at an angle and be curved. When necessary, the view onto the square should be filtered by an architectural element such as an arch. All this contributes to the sense of space enclosure, provoking “the shock in the spectator” (*le saisissement du spectateur*), as Jeanneret put

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<sup>65</sup> Collins and Collins, “Camillo Sitte,” 65-67.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> On the influence of the German discourse on form on Sitte see *Ibid.*, 67, 375n163. Stanford Anderson, for instance, has noted that the shift in theoretical dominance from the tectonic conception of architecture to a spatial conception was fixed by Schmarsow. Stanford Anderson, “Modern Architecture and Industry: Peter Behrens and the AEG Factories” (1981), in *Oppositions reader*, ed. K. Michael Hays (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 524.

it.<sup>68</sup> Jeanneret was therefore looking at the town square through the notion of space enclosure, associating it with the spatiotemporal experience of its accesses.

A similar attitude informed the discourse on streets. The first source for Jeanneret's approach to streets was the short chapter added by Martin to the French translation of *Der Städtebau*, but the theme was addressed by many of Sitte's followers, specifically Schultze-Naumburg and Henrici.<sup>69</sup> These transposed Sitte's arguments on the enclosure of space to streets, and advocated setbacks and curved streets, whose space appears visually contained, and whose profile and dimensions should be determined from the viewpoint of the pedestrian.

Jeanneret attached great importance to the experience of streets:

“Ce chapitre est le plus important, car de l'aspect des rues naît l'impression de charme ou de laideur d'une ville. C'est en parcourant les rues d'une cité qu'on trouve motif à s'enthousiasmer, à rêver, à se divertir ou que l'on sentira la morne lassitude nous atteindre ...”<sup>70</sup>

Besides space enclosure, another theme in Jeanneret's discussion of streets shows the influence of the German discourse on form: the rhythm of façades. The curve, Jeanneret writes, creates an asymmetrical view putting in evidence the continuous surface of the facades on the concave side. The curved surface will suggest the direction to follow, and the more the surface is offered to the view of the pedestrian along the street, the more the street will seem vast and important. The pedestrian will benefit from the rhythm and variety of the facades: carried along in a pleasant spiritual state by a sequence of changing impressions, he will arrive at the end of the street sooner than he expected. Conversely, in a straight street the pedestrian constantly rests the eyes upon the end of it and the indistinct mass of the facades resulting from the foreshortened view will not emphasize the architectural variety. The real length will be diminished and he will easily feel tired.<sup>71</sup> This discussion is taken from Henrici. In Jeanneret, the analogy that follows is no surprise: one gets less tired “de se promener” during two hours in the mountains than to walk during the same period of time on a straight road.<sup>72</sup>

The idea that the continuous rhythmic surface of the curved street will suggest the direction to follow, “transporting” the pedestrian through a pleasant spiritual state, reflects the *Einfühlung* theories on the “rhythmic impression of form” and the “pleas-

<sup>68</sup> Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 334-35.

<sup>69</sup> Schnoor, *Le Corbusier*, 37-40

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 295-97.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

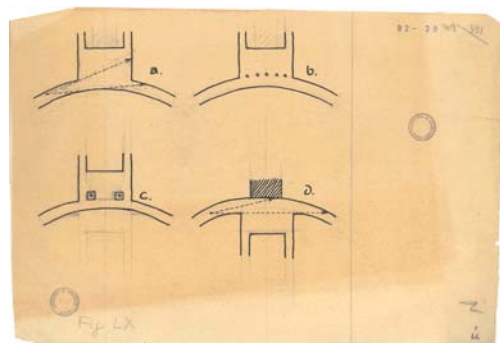


FIG. 163 Jeanneret. Urban schemes after Henrici, *Beiträge zur praktischen Ästhetik im Städtebau*.

ant overall sensation of harmonic series of successful self-motion”<sup>73</sup> Through Henrici, Jeanneret thought of the German discourse on the rhythm of form as something that relates not simply to eye perception, but also to the temporal experience of the inhabitant: since the eyes of the promeneur (du passant) need to encounter real surfaces, Jeanneret writes, the skills of the urban designer lie in the play of optical illusions, and the street designer will strive to multiply these surfaces. Jeanneret was thus transposing the empathetic process of the dynamic eye perception into the spatiotemporal experience of the enclosed spaces.”<sup>74</sup>

Another scheme, also taken from Henrici, substantiates this view (fig. 163). Its point of departure is the curved street, though its specific aim is to discuss the way the street should be enlarged in order to emphasize a building of particular importance. The best solution, it is argued, is to enlarge the street on the convex side as shown in diagram “d,” because it maintains the continuity of the facades on the concave side, the one that is offered to the view along the street. In addition, it provides a secluded space out of the circulation route from which to admire the main building. To enlarge the street on the concave side would interrupt this continuity, like in diagram “a.” In order to improve such a situation it would be necessary to plant trees or erect monuments, like in diagrams “b” and “c.”<sup>75</sup> Here, the Sittesque emphasis on the “pictorial effects” of asymmetrical views and closed perspectives becomes explicitly associated with the idea of offering sequential uninterrupted rhythmic surfaces of facades to the eyes of the *promeneur*. Trees or monuments, it is implicitly understood, would help to re-establish this rhythm, which relates to the dynamic experience of space.

For Jeanneret, then, the picturesque spatiotemporal experience of sequential tab-

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73 Robert Vischer, “Optical Sense of Form,” 97.

74 “L’habilité du traceur de rues sera donc de jouer avec des illusions d’optique favorables au défavorables : moins on verra de surface de fond dans la rue et de surface des façades, plus la rue sera crue ... Créant une erreur préjudiciable au piéton qui la parcourt, cette rue est ennuyeuse.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 295-96. Several passages reflect the influence of German aesthetics, exploring the emotion sparked by the eye perception of rhythmic surfaces, form or color, comparing it with musical rhythm. (ibid., 209, 249, 330, passim). For Jeanneret’s interest in optical illusions see also idem, *Allemagne Carnets*, 4:[21] 23-29.

75 Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 305-07.



leaux has become informed with the categories of space-form and rhythm, absorbed from Sitte and Henrici. It is this consideration of space-form and rhythmic façades that underlies the passage above mentioned where Jeanneret speaks of the “corporalité” of town squares as a primordial condition to render it perceptible to the eye (*saisissable aux regards*), and of a “character of volume, of a room,” which stands for an enclosed unity resulting from the dimensional and proportional combination of the plan and rhythmic facades.

The consideration of new aesthetic categories would be further expanded by combining the category of space-form with that of volume-form, a combination that took place within the classicizing leanings of the discourse on town planning. Besides Sitte and Henrici, another important reading for Jeanneret was *Platz und Monument* by another follower of Sitte, A.E. Brinckmann. The first trip to Berlin in June 1910, during which Jeanneret finally embraced classicism, led him to Brinckmann, interested in regularly shaped spaces. Feeding upon him, Jeanneret compared the peripheral colonnades of the Pompeian forum to those in the Place des Vosges in Paris (fig. 164) or in the piazza St. Marco in Venice, seeing the overall rhythm of the uniform composition of the facades as a device to convey tranquility and secure the square’s “unity of volume.”<sup>76</sup> On one level, Jeanneret was reading Sitte’s praise for the colonnades around the Pompeian forum through the German discourse on the rhythm of form. On another level, he was now advocating Classical regular form, instead of the irregular medieval square.

While Sitte and Henrici had focused on the space of urban squares and streets respectively, and on the role of edge conditions in its definition, Brinckmann focused on the relationship between the spatial quality of the squares and the sculptural quality of centrally placed statues in them;<sup>77</sup> and, through his focus on monuments, he expanded Jeanneret’s categories to include not only space but also (convex) volume. One can sense the attention to volume in the second passage that we cited earlier: “exaltation des couleurs, ou formes jouant en beaux volumes sous les caresses de la lumière, exaltation et beauté qui ne naissent que par des jeux d’équilibre et de rythmes – lesquels plaisent au sens de la vue ...”

<sup>76</sup> “... conserver à ses façades le maximum de tranquillité ... affirmer par-dessus toute autre chose, l’unité de volume de la place, la sobriété des lignes architectural ...” *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Zucker has pointed out that Brinckmann was one of the few aestheticians who saw architectural creation as the result of the mutual integration and combination of space-form and volume-form. Paul Zucker, “The Paradox of Architectural Theories at the Beginning of the ‘Modern Movement,’” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 10, no. 3 (Oct. 1951), 12. Although Brinckmann was sharply critic of Sitte, he “continued Sitte’s tendency to analyze abstractly in terms of space and rhythm,” building a “twentieth-century superstructure upon Sitte’s ideas.” See Collins and Collins, “Camillo Sitte,” 95-97.

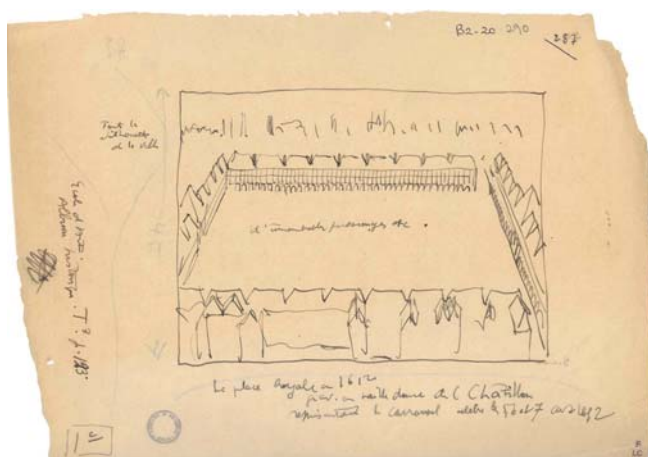


FIG. 164 Jeanneret. Paris. Place des Vosges., 1911.

FIG. 165 Donatello. Padua. Gattamelata. From Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument*.

We find a first echo of Brinckmann in Jeanneret's discussion of Donatello's *Gattamelata*, in Padua, placed high above a pedestal (fig. 165). Jeanneret had first read about Donatello's statue in Sitte's book. Defending the placement of monuments at the periphery of squares, Sitte emphasized its original location next to the corner of a no longer extant high wall. Jeanneret takes this example in his manuscript. But he seems to change his attitude with regard to Sitte's argument in a later moment. In the passage "mur, malheureusement disparu aujourd'hui" he crosses out the word "malheureusement." Following Brinckmann, who had challenged Sitte on this point, he was now interested in the free volume within the square's space, rather than in its peripheral location. The original contrast of the statue's dark bronze mass with the wall is compensated by that with the blue luminous sky, and here Jeanneret evokes Greek statuary.<sup>78</sup>

This dialogue of space and freestanding volume becomes clear in some of the classical examples discussed by Brinckmann and endorsed by Jeanneret, namely in the discussion of the squares and monuments of Louis XIV and Louis XV, which he now extols. The main examples are the Place des Vosges, with the equestrian statue of Louis XIII originally placed at the centre, and the Place Royale in Nancy. In both he praises the rhythmic composition of the homogeneous facades providing the square with unity. But he now argues that its proportions had been calculated to enhance the statue at the centre. Square and monument, he concludes, form a homogeneous block.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Sitte, *City Planning*, 156-57; Jeanneret, "Construction des villes," 366-70; Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument*, 10-14.

<sup>79</sup> "Les proportions de celle-ci [the square] étaient calculées pour la plus heureuse mise en valeur de la statue qui à son tour était modelée pour la place elle-même; les dimensions de son socle, la hauteur de laquelle dominait le bronze, étaient en rapports intimes avec le socle du palais, la corniche de toits, la proéminence des colonnades. Elle se dressait au centre... Véritablement alors, la place et le monument ne formaient plus qu'un bloc homogène..." Jeanneret, "Construction des villes," 377-80; Brinckmann, *Platz un monument*, 93-94, 117-122.

This lay the seeds for a new understanding of Pisa and its enclosed space ordered by freestanding architectural volumes. Although such understanding would take place more explicitly in his 1911 visit, a passage in the section “Murs de clôture” of the 1910 manuscript shows the influence of his readings about town planning. Jeanneret starts the section addressing the importance that walls linking isolated buildings (*cubes isolés*) have in securing the enclosure of the streets’ space. In trying to sustain his argument historically, he gives the example of Pisa, where he sees the 15 meter high enclosing wall as a device to compensate the lack of cohesion of the buildings:

“Les architectes des époques passés ont toujours su imprimer à une solution pratique le sceau de la beauté, ou tirer d’une expression plastique des avantages pratiques et utilitaires capables de motiver la mise en œuvre des matériaux nécessaires. S’agissait-il des édifices dont le plan d’ensemble n’offrait pas la cohésion exigée par l’œil qui, à tout prix, veut se reposer sur des surfaces visibles, l’architecte du XIII siècle à Pise, par exemple sur la Place du Dôme, créait tout autour de la vaste pelouse où se dressent, prestigieux, le Dôme, le Baptistère, et la Tour penchée, une clôture haute de près de 15 mètres ; un mur uni, brutal, découpé de créneaux.”<sup>80</sup>

Described as a plastic element capable of giving cohesion to the loose buildings, the wall enclosing the architectural volumes implies the notion of space ordered by free standing volumes.<sup>81</sup> One year later, revisiting Pisa, Jeanneret wrote to Ritter that in the Piazza dei Miracoli “toute l’affaire est un bloc ...”, using the same language that he uses to talk of the Place des Vosges and the Place Royale in Nancy. For him, “bloc” stands for “unity,” one unified spatio-volumetric composition.<sup>82</sup>

All in all, it can be argued that, having started to look at town planning through the picturesque categories of his early education, Jeanneret gradually overlaid them with the German discourse on form; and this went together with his conversion to classicism. Moreover, for Jeanneret, space and volume emerged as architectural categories closely associated with the perceptual temporal experience of city and architecture. As he accepted Sitté’s comparison of a square and a room, the tension of *dedans* and *dehors* that he had intuited during his first visit to Pisa in 1907 was no longer put in terms of the proceedings of nature, but in formal terms: volumes within space sparking emotions through a dynamic experience. It is the interaction of these categories that constructs the experience of the city. Though still barely formulated at this point,

<sup>80</sup> Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 394-96.

<sup>81</sup> In this respect, let me indulge in an analogy drawn by Hildebrand: “Let us therefore imagine the spatial continuum as a body of water in which we can submerge containers and thus define individual volumes as specifically formed individual bodies without losing the conception of the whole as one continuous body of water.” Hildebrand, “Problems of Form in the Fine Arts” (1893), in Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 238.

<sup>82</sup> Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 November 1911.

they will certainly play a role in Le Corbusier's work in the 1920s.

#### PERSISTENCE OF THE NARRATIVE DIMENSION: CONCEPTUALIZING THE CITY

In layering German perceptual concepts and aesthetic categories upon the Sittesque connections with the picturesque—and despite the German discourse on form having conferred an articulating statement to his conversion to classicism—Jeanneret continued to conceptualize the experience of the city in terms of the dialectics of the picturesque and the sublime. The narrative dimension structured by this dialectics seems to have allowed him to reconcile the picturesque and classical leanings of his readings, leading him to construct a view of the city as a conjunction of both.

In arguing for the persistence of the narrative dimension in Jeanneret's approach to town planning, one may start by remembering that, for Jeanneret, the experiential pattern based on the picturesque and the Sublime is rooted in the Jura landscape. The connection between the Sittesque discourse and the experience of nature is reflected in Jeanneret's manuscript when, for instance, he advocates organic urban plans and curved streets. Following authors such as Martin and Henrici, Jeanneret argues that streets must be curved and their width and slope must vary. On the one hand, they are more natural as they comply with the configuration of the slopes and valleys, offering, like rural pathways, the minimum effort and fastest circulation. Jeanneret called it the lesson of the donkey. On another level, the aesthetic experience of streets complying with the terrain is more suitable for promenades.<sup>83</sup> A passage of the introductory chapter illustrates the view:

“La première méthode [of the urban designer], c'était *la conception dans l'espace*. Les rues et les places se traçaient en considération de la topographie des lieux, profitaient de la structure du sol, des ses ressources pratiques, économiques, hygiéniques, des ses capacités de beauté. On plaçait les édifices publics là où leur destination recevait pleine satisfaction, - destination à l'utilité, destination à la munificence. Il en était de même pour tous les autres édifices. - Le traceur de plans était statuaire parce qu'il voyait dans les 3 dimensions ; il était poète, parce qu'il créait des paysages faits de main d'homme, en lesquels, la beauté, toute imprégnée des lois de la Nature pouvait rendre agréable et charmant le séjour des villes.”<sup>84</sup>

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The connection between city and landscape is expanded in Jeanneret's assertion that, by being in accordance with the topography, the city enriches and enhances the landscape, and keeps the flavor and interest of a natural creation:

83 Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 319-21. For similar arguments see Sitte, *City Planning*, 267.

84 Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 258.

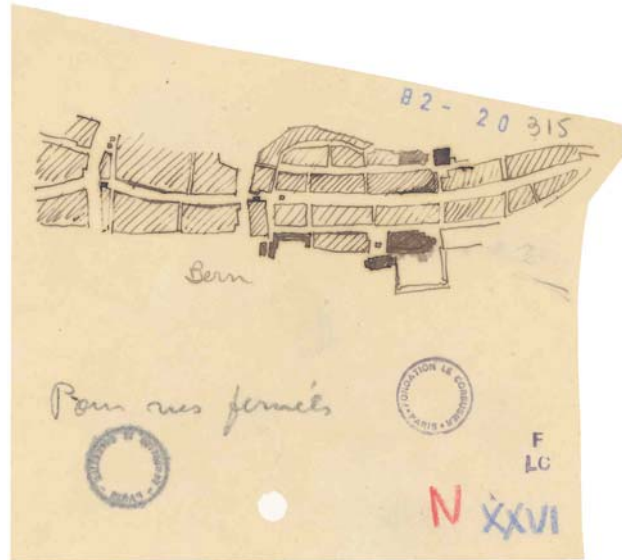
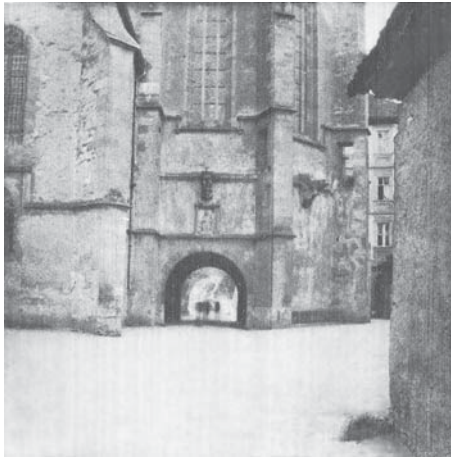


FIG. 166 Jeanneret. Würzburg. St. Burkhard Church, 1910.

FIG. 167 Jeanneret. Bern. Marktasse. Plan.

“Or, jamais les chemins ruraux, ceux qui furent tracés par les paysans et non par les géomètres officiels, ne sont tirés au cordeau. Leur ligne de montée est souple et fait toujours dans les campagnes un effet décoratif ; ces lignes étant en rapport intime avec les collines et les vallons qui ont réglé leur tracé, apportant souvent au paysage l’élément de beauté de leur filet blanc accusant les modelés des monts ... Ces chemins devraient donc être les lignes de vie tout indiqués autour desquels le traceur des villes tissera la maille de ses rues ... les exemples ne manquent pas de villes ... qui étalent au flanc des collines le charme exquis de leurs vivants tracés ... Les édifices peuvent être quelconques, dépourvus de toute richesse, ces villes gardent toujours la saveur et l’intérêt d’une création naturelle.”<sup>85</sup>

This parallel between landscape and city thus concerns a formal complementary quality (evaluated from afar) and an experiential quality, through which the urban design defines “lignes de vie,” or “vivants tracés.”

In Sitte, in turn, one senses the latent idea of narrative, especially if we associate his arguments about the unfolding experience offered by the entry of streets into squares and those advocating that the arrangement of the square must emphasize the main building. This suggestion of a narrative ending in the square oriented towards the main building is reinforced by the idea developed by Sitte’s followers that cities should be made up of curved streets. Schultze-Naumburg, for instance, introduced the notion of organic street system.<sup>86</sup> The streets are thought of as enclosed spaces, meaning that the city is thought of as a sequence of interconnected spaces to be experienced in time, ultimately leading to their main squares.

It is thus that Jeanneret seems to conceptualize the promeneur’s experience—the

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 303-04.

<sup>86</sup> See Schnoor, “Munich to Berlin,” 85.



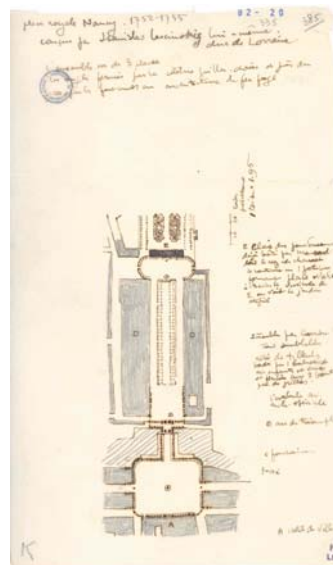
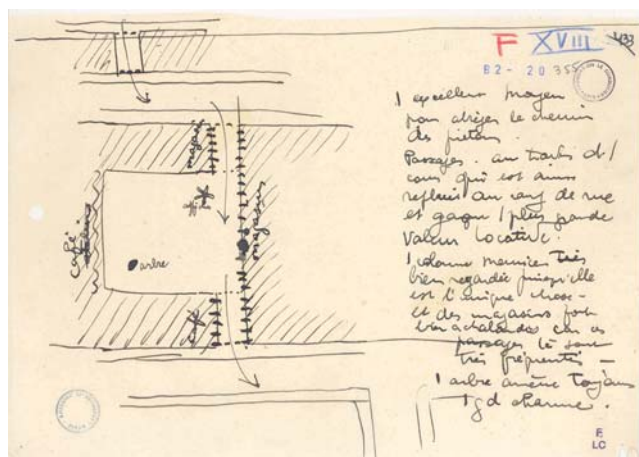


FIG. 168 Jeanneret. "Passages."

FIG. 169 Jeanneret. Nancy. Place Royale. Sketch after Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument*

unfolding of a set of interconnected spatial units—in his approach to, say, St. Burkhard church, in Würzburg, or the Marktgasse in Bern (fig. 166, 167). Writing about the latter, Jeanneret argues that its beauty stems first from the sense of perfect volume of the street and only then from the facades' design. He is interested in how the main building, placed at the extremity of the street, encloses space and provides the visual focus, while simultaneously working as an arcade or filtering construction, participating in the articulation of the unfolding spaces. The street thus offers an autonomous experience, while partaking of a broader one. In new cities, he holds, the same effect can be achieved with distinct forms of "passages" creating enclosed spaces between buildings (fig. 168).<sup>87</sup>

The conception of the city as a set of interconnected spatial units could be easily transposed to the classical examples explored by Brinckmann, enlivening the idea of narrative. In the case of the Place Royale in Nancy, for instance, Jeanneret recognized the Sittesque urban conception of sequential enclosed spaces articulated by porticos filtering the unfolding views (fig. 169).<sup>88</sup> His view was certainly informed by the lessons he had learned in Paris, while the analogy between urban and architectural spaces

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 312-24.

<sup>88</sup> "... à Nancy et ailleurs, cette place était parfaitement belle et digne encore de notre plus grande admiration. Qu'on ne voie pas là une contradiction aux principes énoncés précédemment. C'est au contraire leur démonstration définitive tout particulier. Car il ne s'agit pas, à l'instar du classicisme du XIX siècle, de réinstaurer une formule : celle de la place irrégulière ... il faut les retrouver [the principles of medieval and ancient squares] dans ces exemples devenues classiques du XVII et du XVIII siècle ... Vestibule d'honneur au devant des palais qui la bordent ..." Writing on the relationship between these squares and the streets leading to them he adds: "Ces rues, nous l'avons dit déjà, étaient peu profondes, et si, à quelque cent mètres elles n'étaient point fermées d'un hôtel ou palais (place des Victoires et place Vendôme) ou des arcs de triomphe Nancy, la trouée inopportune dans les parois de la place, était annulée par des portiques à grand caractère architectural, poursuivant à travers l'embouchure des rues, les motifs des façades, ajoutant ainsi à l'unité imposante (Place Louis XV). Ibid., 377-379.



FIG. 170 Munich. Maximilianstrasse. Postcard.

could easily evoke the French *hôtel* model and the concept of *la marche*.<sup>89</sup> Like in the French *hôtel*, the sequential spaces leading to the square would naturally be read as a narrative leading to the main square and palace.

It is however in the conjunction of picturesque and classical design that the narrative pattern of the Jura landscape emerges within a comprehensive consideration of the city, and it is through this conjunction that Jeanneret seems to have conceptualized the city and the experience associated with it. Before we pursue further, we must take a closer look at his thinking on classicism and the straight street.

In arguing for the curved street, Jeanneret starts by comparing the straight street with the desert, since “the eyes don’t capture anything but the obsessive convergence of four lines towards a point in the horizon.” It follows that only by being short will a straight street provide the sense of volume. In other words, only by assuring the visual presence of the spatial limits will space-form be defined.<sup>90</sup> Jeanneret is feeding upon authors such as Henrici or Martin, who did not reject completely the straight street. Their argument was that, depending on good proportion between length and width, the straight street is necessary. But, being monumental, it must only be applied occasionally, have a monumental termination, and take into consideration the configuration of the terrain.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> In endorsing Sitte’s comparison of monuments to furniture, Jeanneret’s words recall the Parisian lessons on the private and public spaces of a dwelling: “Un monument ou une fontaine est un meuble, plus encore, un objet de luxe, le meuble d’honneur de la place. Les époques passées, comme la vie moderne, nous montrent ds l’habitation de l’homme deux sortes de chambres ou de salles: la chambre où l’on vit, toute empreinte de l’intimité chère au cœur; la sale de parade, - chambre de réception, vestibule d’honneur, - image du faste, de la grandeur, que l’homme aime à afficher en certaines occasions.” Ibid., 364.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 300-02, 327-28.

<sup>91</sup> The only passage of Martin in the straight street reads: “The influence of the Renaissance can also be detected in straight design. Because Roman thoroughfares had been straight, the Renaissance artists went back to the straight street, correct and classic. It offers us a more restricted field of study, its perfection being primarily dependent on a good proportion between its length and width, on the kind of edifices of which it is composed, and on its monumental termination. If we dedicate to it here only a few lines, one must not assume that we are trying to combat its use. Straight roads are necessary today and are often of very imposing effect. What we condemn is their mechanical employment, a priori, without concerning oneself with the configuration of the terrain or other local circumstances. If the meandering line is more picturesque, the straight one is more monumental; but we cannot subsist on monumentality alone, and

Well aware of this attitude through Martin's supplemental chapter on streets in his translation of Sitte, Jeanneret nevertheless developed a different attitude during his visit in Berlin (fig. 170). We can see it in the manuscript, where, as noted by Passanti, Jeanneret suddenly extols the straight street:

“La ville en damier va donc en disparaître et la conception des administrations actuelles se transformera. Alors, à ce moment seulement, la rue droite reprendra ses droits ; ses droits à la plus grande beauté. La droite, la ligne noble par excellence dans la Nature. – mais justement la plus rare ! Les solennelles colonnes rigides des forêts de sapins ; l'horizontale de la mer ; la grandeur de la plaine immense ; le grandiose des Alpes vues d'un sommet, alors que toutes les violences se sont fondues en une vaste surface apaisée !”<sup>92</sup>

Passanti has noted that in this sudden tirade Jeanneret “is clearly thinking of the aesthetic category of the Sublime,” and that, “instead of just providing agreeable settings for civic interaction, as Sitte's school had, Le Corbusier now also wants to provoke powerful emotion. Far from utilitarian, the straight street is appreciated as iconic and transcendent.”<sup>93</sup> Then Passanti notes that Jeanneret transcribed in the same section Laugier's precept about urban planning: order in the detail, tumult in the ensemble: “by this Laugier intended (and Le Corbusier understood) that there must always be a guiding intention in laying out the city, and that the variety of a city must be willed, not haphazard, and made of large gestures.”<sup>94</sup>

Nonetheless, in thinking of the straight street in monumental terms, Jeanneret maintains Martin's remaining arguments: its exceptional use, the complying with the terrain, and the monumental termination. He argues that the impression of grandeur and beauty sparked by the straight street results from its exceptional use and striking dimensions, claims for the favorable effect of “some slope or a concavity,” and adds that the straight street should be always closed at its upper extremity by a “building of glory,” rendered even more magical by a skillful orientation. Two examples are adduced: “the avenue of the Champs-Élysées in Paris, crowned by the immense arch of triumph behind which the sun gloriously falls in the sunset,” and “Berlin, in the evening, the effect of the Siegesallee at the extremity of which stands the Siegesäule merged in the purple twilight and almost mirrored in the macadam polished by cars.”<sup>95</sup>

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...

it would be desirable that the builders of modern cities do not abuse the one or the other, but make use of them both as appropriate, in order to give to each district which they lay out an aspect in conformity with its purpose.” Martin, “Streets,” 204-05.

<sup>92</sup> Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 327.

<sup>93</sup> Passanti, “Aesthetic Dimension,” 28.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 31. Brooks has noted that Jeanneret was reading Laugier at least since October 1910. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 232n27.

<sup>95</sup> Deux impressions s'attachent à la rue droite : l'impression de grandiose ; l'impression de beauté. – Le grandiose

In both the Siegesallee and the Champs-Élysées, Jeanneret exalts the mutual combination of a monumental space-form and a monumental enclosing volume-form. The category of the Sublime stems from the grandeur and straight plan of the street and from its combination with the monumental volume-form, providing visual focus. The sublime effect is highlighted in Jeanneret's painterly descriptions, conveying powerful emotion either through the image of the backlit mass of the arch of triumph or through the reflections of the Siegestaule merged in the twilight. The category of the sublime is thus brought into the realm of the city, associated with the classicist quality of the street. But for Jeanneret, this powerful emotion of the classicist street partakes in a broader experience. In this respect we must return to Laugier.

The transcription of Laugier's precept precedes the arguments on the straight line. Jeanneret is concerned about the monotony which may result from mindlessly applying the Sittesque principles that he is advocating. To avoid monotony, these principles must not be generalized, but be combined with the specificities of the terrain.<sup>96</sup> The sudden praise for the monumental straight street seems to relate to the same concerns and comprehensive view of the city. The straight street, Jeanneret claims, has to be conceived outside the grid à l'américaine. The argument is that the effect of grandeur and beauty will only be effective when applied exceptionally, and thus experienced by contrast with the surrounding urban fabric. Underlying this assessment seems to be the idea of the city as a background texture of twisting streets—a urban fabric of articulated spatial units complying with the terrain—with an experiential exception provided by the large gesture of the monumental straight street.

This principle had a deep history in Jeanneret. On the one hand, it was latent in his interest for “the shock in the spectator” sparked by the filtered accesses to squares advocated by Sitte. This seems to explain why he saw the straight street as the confirmation of his previous writings.<sup>97</sup> But on the other hand, the idea of the experience of

...  
 lorsque, par son emploi exceptionnel, elle devient frappante et que ses dimensions sont si démesurées qu'elle stupéfie. Une certaine pente ou une concavité lui sera favorable, et toujours elle sera fermée à son extrémité supérieure par un édifice de gloire. Une orientation habile le rendra plus magique encore. Telle est l'avenue des Champs-Élysées [sic.] à Paris couronnée par l'immense arc de triomphe derrière lequel se couche en gloire le soleil. Tel à Berlin, le soir, 'l'effet' de la Siegesallee à l'extrémité de laquelle se dresse la Siegestaule toute noyée dans le pourpre du couchant et se mirant presque dans le macadam poli par les automobiles. Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 327.

<sup>96</sup> “Résumons cet aperçu sur le tracé des rue. L'habitant d'une ville ne peut se contenter de monotonie. Les méthodes citées précédemment ne devront donc jamais être généralisées en des quartiers entiers. Laugier avait dit déjà au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: 'Il faut de la régularité et de la bizarrerie, des rapports et des oppositions, des accidents qui varient le tableau ; un grand ordre ds les détails ; de la confusion, du fracas, du tumulte dans l'ensemble.' L'agrément d'une ville dépendra précisément de la combinaison riche, et intelligente de tous les procédés imaginables. Ns ne prétendrons certes pas avoir énoncé l'ensemble des méthodes. Le champ des combinaisons architecturales est inépuisable. Ce qui avant tout guidera, pendant son travail, le géomètre, c'est le terrain : il aura le respect du sol qu'il est chargé de mettre en valeur.” Ibid., 325.

<sup>97</sup> “Vous pensez donc bien que la Städtebauausstellung fut pour moi d'une importance capitale. Elle apporta, j'en suis tout joyeux, la consécration complète à tout ce que j'avais écrit.” Jeanneret to parents, 29 June 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:314.

the monumental street after meandering along a network of curved streets connects back to the dialectics of the picturesque and the Sublime associated with the experience of the Jura Mountains. Indeed, in praising the monumental straight street, he compares it to “le grandiose des Alpes vues d’un sommet, alors que toutes les violences se sont fondues en une vaste surface apaisée”—in short, the distant horizon. In this sense, the idea of a monumental straight street does not just relate to spatial experience, it also brings the narrative pattern of the Jura landscape into the realm of town planning. Through it, he was thinking of the city in narrative terms, grafting the notions of space-form and volume-form onto his earlier thinking in terms of the picturesque and the sublime.

Resonances of this diagrammatic conceptualization of the city as a large gesture set at the centre of a background urban texture may be found in Le Corbusier’s later urban plans, such as in the grid of the *Ville Contemporaine* and its central skyscrapers. If we accept that this conception is rooted in this early association between town planning and the experiential dialectics of the picturesque and the sublime, such roots substantiate our initial reading of the links between the *Ville Contemporaine* and the experiential pattern of the architectural promenade; and this is also in keeping with our precedent proposition that, in Paris, Jeanneret objectified the “spectacle” of the city in its major symbols.

#### JEANNERET’S CHAPTER ON GARDENS: GEOMETRIC GRID AND CONTEMPLATIVE LANDSCAPE

Another resonance of the Jura narrative pattern which interests us is found in Jeanneret’s writings about garden design. They reveal how for the first time Jeanneret thought positively of a structuring grid as something capable of endowing variety with unity, while the complementary role of picturesque and classicist qualities remained associated to a meandering experience submitted to a major narrative.

The section about gardens in “*La Construction des villes*” is based on extensive reading: Georges Riat’s *L’Art des jardins* (1900), Hermann Muthesius’s *Das englische Haus* (1904), Joseph August Lux’s *Der Städtebau und die Grundpfeiler der heimischen Bauweise* (1908), etc.<sup>98</sup> Through them, Jeanneret returned to two main themes of the contemporary debate about garden design that he was acquainted with since La Chaux-de-Fonds: the comparison of the garden with an open-air room of the house and the attempt to fuse the landscape garden and the formal garden.<sup>99</sup> These were now historically contextualized through Riat, who provides a historical survey of garden

98 See Schnoor, *Le Corbusier*, 142-53.

99 See “Theoretical Frameworks,” in chap. 1.



design ranging from antiquity to the nineteenth century.

The first sign of Jeanneret incorporating the analogy between the garden and architecture is found in his particular interest for the ancient Roman garden conceived of as an intimate, enclosed space, open to the sky, and extending the house to the rear. Following Riat, the main idea is that, in constituting an additional room, the private garden should be submitted to the laws of architecture and give continuity to the sequence of rooms (*1 continuation des salles, vestibules etc.*).<sup>100</sup> This would be crucial to Jeanneret's approach to the Pompeian typology in his 1911 visit, when he certainly recognized in their sequences of rooms and vestibules the scheme of the French *hôtel* and the narrative associated with it. The balanced play of asymmetry and geometric axial order that he will extol in the House of the Tragic Poet, we must note in passing, belongs to the same essential dialectics of Classicism and picturesque that we find in his writings about the Italian garden, the most significant theme of the section on gardens.

The Italian garden is discussed in Jeanneret's section about urban parks, which Jeanneret interpreted through the same analogy to architectural space. Criticizing the scale and proportion of nineteenth-century classic gardens, Jeanneret returned to the Sittesque argument about space enclosure.<sup>101</sup> If the small private garden should be conceived as a room of the dwelling, the public garden should be conceived as an architectural arrangement of rooms offering a sequence of different spaces. In a sense, this finds a parallel in the conception of the city as a sequence of spatial units, now submitted to a geometric layout.

A central issue here is the articulation of the natural and the manmade through the combination of order and variety, which informed the debate on the French formal garden and the English landscape garden. According to Riat, a remarkable combination of the two models—the formal and the landscape garden—is found in the gardens of the Italian villas of the Renaissance, the inheritors of Roman gardens. Jeanneret wrote after Riat:

“En résumé le jardin (de la Renaissance) est inspiré des jardins de la Rome impériale ; ils forment eux et la villa, un cadre à Souhais pour leur propriétaires : grds Seigneurs, hommes de cour, antiquaires et italiens. La distribution en est panoramique et symé-

**100** Jeanneret wrote after Riat “Dire que le jardin attenant à l'habitation ne doit pas être 1 rappel de nature, mais 1 continuation des salles, vestibules etc., des chambres de soleil ou de fraîcheur.” A few pages later Jeanneret returned to the subject: “Tout est ordonné av. 1 soin jaloux par l'architecte. Il ne faut pas l'oublier, en effet, et on ne peut assez insister sur cette idée, que le jardin romain est oeuvre d'architecte, que tout y est subordonné à l'architecture.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 406, 415; Riat, *L'Art des jardins* (Paris: Société Française d'éditions d'art, 1900), 34-38, 44. Riat quotes Taine's *Voyage en Italie* which Jeanneret had read in 1907.

**101** “Il faut bien affirmer ceci: pour JARDINS. C'est que ce sont des chambres, - en effet, plancher, parois et plafond, et non pas des maisons. Et qu'il faut créer des volumes ds lesquels on se trouve dedans et non pas situés hors de soi. Le volume on offre aux regards, le volume est hors de l'empire du sens.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 405. Note that, also here, Jeanneret uses the term “volume” to refer to space.

trique, au moyen de terrasses et d'escaliers nombreux ; elle est adéquate à la nature spéciale du site choisi ; les lignes architectoniques commandent les lignes générales des parterres et des bosquets, ainsi que le jeu des eaux ; la ligne droite est de règle ; des statues, et des marbres, savamment disposés, en rompent l'uniformité sans la détruire. Les allées conduisent aux points de vue intéressants. Ici, l'art est ajouté à la nature, et non pas la nature à l'art, comme à Versailles, par ex.”<sup>102</sup>

Three main ideas underlie this passage: the responsiveness to the terrain through terraces and stairs, associated with the idea of a broader harmonious relationship with the surrounding landscape; a structuring principle defined by the Classical geometric pattern of the layout; the introduction of variety within the Classical order through the careful arrangement of statuary.

At a broad level, this means the reconciling of the straight axes of Classical design with variety, paralleling Jeanneret's view of urban design. But whereas for the urban designer the curve is the means to introduce variety, for the gardener the straight line is the means to avoid chaos, establishing order within the irregularity of the natural elements:

“Le jardin est 1 construction faite av. des arbres et des fleurs, donc autant d'éléments qui par leur structure comportent de l'irrégularité, du chaos, du désordre. Cela pris non pas pour 1 arbre seul qui est presque toujours d'1 ordonnance merveilleuse – véritable palmette – mais par comparaison av. les moyens dont dispose l'architecte des villes, de rues et de places, - c-a-d, de figures vigoureusement accusées, brutales, volumes géométriques etc. Donc pour éviter la sécheresse, le traceur de rues et de place[s], emploie la courbe, - pour éviter le chaos, le mille feuille, le rien, le jardinier emploie la droite, qui lui permet d'aligner suivant des perspectives intangibles [?] en plan, des éléments toujours disposés à la fantaisie en élévation, - et de créer ainsi 1 architecture faite de matériaux vivants, architectures c-à-d. ordonnance, volonté, ayant en puissance, 1 sentiment voulu.”<sup>103</sup>

In sum, the design must reconcile variety and unity. Being an *architecture made out of living materials*, the garden secures unity through the straight line. The sense of space enclosure created by the irregularity and variety of natural elements is submitted to a *will* or guiding intention (*volonté*) through the axis. Simultaneously, variety counters abstract axial infinity, breaking the uniformity without destroying it. One may find here a resonance of Jeanneret's photograph of Versailles. Although submitted to a Cartesian order, the garden is experienced in partial “frames” that don't display the axes in an immediate way.

The first point that interests us here, then, is that, having affirmed the design's

102 Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 421; Riat, *L'Art des jardins*, 104.

103 Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 422.

*will* through geometry, the irregularity of vegetation and the exceptional elements out of the main axial order are then apprehended through the dynamic experience of moving through the garden. The second point is that this experience is submitted to a major narrative associated with the structuring guiding intention. Note that, in Riat, the mention of “interesting points of view” does not exclusively refer to statuary placed in particular spaces of the garden. Thinking back to Versailles, Jeanneret could well understand that they refer, above all, to views over the landscape. Riat goes on explaining:

“... une comparaison, que Burckhardt institue entre les deux systèmes [the French garden and the Italian garden of the Renaissance] est très suggestive : ‘Les conception ici sont tout à fait en grand ; il n’y a pas à nier cependant que, sans le concours de ce qui échappe au calcul, le lointain des montagnes, la vue de la campagne ou de la ville, la mer même et ses rivages, l’impression serait peut-être lourde et pesante. Telle est (à mon avis, du moins), l’impression que produit le jardin de Versailles, dont les dernières perspectives se perdent dans la plus insignifiante des contrées. La plaine la plus plate, pourvu qu’elle soit dominée par des lignes de montagnes, peut se prêter au jardin à l’italienne, tandis qu’à Versailles les terrasses les plus expressives ne suppléent pas au manque de vue. Le Contraste entre la nature libre et l’architecture, qui, de l’extérieur, domine le jardin italien, pourrait bien être une des conditions fondamentales du genre.’”<sup>104</sup>

For Burckhardt, the main difference between the Italian garden and Versailles thus lies in its relationship with the landscape. Instead of providing views into infinity like in Versailles, the Italian garden is framed by the elements of a concrete landscape—the distant plains, provided they are dominated by the silhouette of the mountains, fields or cities, sea or rivers. In experiential terms, this is a contemplative landscape, i.e. a landscape to be contemplated. After quoting Burckhardt, Riat discussed, amid others, the gardens of the Villa d’Este, in Tivoli, quoting Stendhal:

“En ses *Promenades dans Rome*, Stendhal ... remarque combien les Italiens d’aujourd’hui savent encore apprécier ces vestiges d’un art ancien. ‘J’ai vu des Romains passer des heures entières dans une admiration muette, appuyés sur une fenêtre de la villa Lante, sur le mont Janicule. On aperçoit au loin les belles figures formées par le palais de Monte-Cavallo, le Capitole, la tour de Néron, le Monte Pincio et l’Académie de France, et l’on a sous les yeux, au bas de la colline, le palais Corsini, la Farnésina, le palais Farnèse.’”<sup>105</sup>

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The influence of this debate on the contemplative dimension of the landscape in Jeanneret, be it built or natural, is confirmed by his 1911 visits to the Villa d’Este or the

**104** Riat, *L’Art des jardins*, 104-05.

**105** Ibid., 110. Jeanneret annotated in his manuscript: “Le Jardin italien en 1500 – Villa d’Este 1549 – Palais Colonna, Villa Madama (Stendhal disait : ‘J’ai vu des Romains passer des heures entières ds 1 admiration muette, appuyés sur 1 fenêtre de la Villa Lante, sur le mont Janicule’ Villa Negroni 1580. La Villa Mattei 1582. Le Quirinal après 1600. Villa Pamphili 168.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 421.

Villa Lante, or his approach to cases such as the Poikile at Hadrian's Villa—the precursor of the garden of the Renaissance—or even Michelangelo's Capitol, where Jeanneret will focus on the view defined by the architectural axes.

In sum, by this time, Jeanneret's acceptance of the geometric layout was supported by three main principles: the replacement of the trimmed topiary by irregular vegetation capable of generating an experience of sequential spaces; the suppression of the infinite void of Versailles's axes, now focusing on a panoramic view over a concrete, contemplative landscape; and the definition of a structuring layout ordering the parts upon which is layered a second irregular order. The Italian garden thus provided Jeanneret with the way to reconcile picturesque narrative and Classical layout, submitting the principle of sequential spaces to a guiding intention expressed in narrative terms.

The preceding analysis of Jeanneret's manuscript of "La Construction des villes" may be summarized as his gradual incorporation of classicism and of the German discourse on form, awakening his interest in the notions of volume, space, and perceptual dynamics. Both in the city and in the Italian garden, these notions were associated with a comprehensive narrative entailing a sequential spatial experience and an axial order set in tension with each other, where the final moment of release is provided by a concrete landscape or cityscape. In the city, this narrative comprises irregular spaces (squares and streets) enriched by sculptural and architectural volumes, held together by an exceptional monumental straight street capable of stirring powerful emotions. In the garden, the narrative comprises a set of spaces (rooms) geometrically ordered, modulated by the irregularity introduced by the natural elements and by statuary, opening onto an idealized Mediterranean landscape, and thus contrasting geometric layout with free nature. Several binomial structures merge in these narratives: picturesque and sublime, prospect and expanse, space-form and volume-form, Romanticism and Classicism, geometry and free nature. Layered over Jeanneret's original experience of the Jura Mountains, these principles and binomial structures would remain very much alive in Le Corbusier's work.

**THE ACQUAINTANCE WITH RITTER, DALCROZE AND APPIA:  
CLASSICAL FORM, MEDITERRANEAN LANDSCAPE, NARRATIVE, AND  
GESAMTKUNSTWERK**

Having discussed the city, we must now turn to the larger consideration of architecture and landscape. What were, for Jeanneret, the implications of the contemporary discourses on classicism and aesthetics for a comprehensive understanding of the natural and the manmade? How did he conceptualize the experience of them? And also, what was the meaning of this experience? These questions will be discussed in the following sections.

**ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE: FORM AND MEANING**

One may start by noting that, though in different ways, the discourses on town planning, classicism and aesthetics all broadly share a mythical view of Mediterranean landscapes and civilizations. While this is felt in the debate of the Italian garden above discussed, it is also made manifest in Sitte, for instance. Noting how the use and significance of public open spaces had changed in the nineteenth century, Sitte extols the primary role that these spaces played in the urban public life of ancient and medieval cities, either harboring popular festivities or serving as daily gathering places. And he claims that medieval town squares are rooted in the Roman forums and their predecessors, the Greek agoras and religious precincts. The Greek agora exemplifies the multifunctional purpose of these open air spaces, serving as the meeting place of the city council, as the marketplace, or as the place for religious manifestations such as the sacrifices offered in front of the temples. This expresses the Romantic ideal of a modern society renewed by myth and collective manifestation. Put differently, ancient urban spaces embody the model for a harmonious relationship between life and the city, for they constitute ideal scenarios for public collective manifestations.

To this, Sitte than adds a mythical relationship between ancient cities and the Mediterranean landscape, citing as an example the forum at Pompeii seen from the top of the temple of Jupiter:

“The irrepressible gaiety of the southerner on Hellenic shores, or in lower Italy and other happy regions, is primarily a gift of nature, but the ancient cities, in harmony as they were with the beauties of nature, also acted with a gentle yet irresistible power upon the temperament of the people. Anyone who has enjoyed the charms of an ancient city would hardly disagree with this idea of the strong influence of physical setting on the human soul. Perhaps most effective in this sense are the ruins of Pompeii. Here in the evening, starting homeward after a long day’s work, one is powerfully drawn to ascend



the flight of steps of the Temple of Jupiter in order to view from its podium over and over again the noble spectacle that is spread before his eyes, and out of which surge rich harmonies like the most beautiful music—pure and sonorous.”<sup>106</sup>

This passage echoes the Romantic belief in an “original” existence in harmony with the natural world and in a close association between the simple Classical forms and the forms of an idealized Mediterranean landscape. This formal association is framed by Romantic theories that attributed the different artistic expressions of the various civilizations to their rootedness in specific geographic contexts. Jeanneret’s 1911 visit to Pompeii, we will see, reveals that he was quite attentive to Sitte’s passage about the Forum in Pompeii, and to the importance it assigns to the surrounding landscape. But it was mostly through his acquaintance with William Ritter that he developed a comprehensive view of the Mediterranean landscape and of Classical architecture experienced in its context.

Ritter was from a Neuchâtel family and had benefited from a privileged *fin-de-siècle* education with periods in Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Dole, Prague, Vienna, and Florence. He studied painting, art history, and music under Anton Bruckner. After living in Paris as a novelist and in Bucharest, where he travelled throughout the country and collected vernacular artifacts, he finally moved to Munich as an art critic, and there Jeanneret started to visit him regularly from May 1910 onwards. Ritter, who gradually took the role of L’Eplattenier as Jeanneret’s mentor, believed that identity was shaped by cultural and geographic context, hence race. He supported the intellectual movement around *La Voile Latine*—a journal published in Geneva from 1904 to 1910—which claimed a Mediterranean identity for French-speaking Switzerland.<sup>107</sup>

The movement’s search for an artistic identity of the “Suisse-romande” rested on the same associations of race, geography and identity. Their “Latin spirit” was justified by the allegedly geographic affinities between the Jura and the Mediterranean landscape, epitomized by the mountains and the Mediterranean, “ce grand lac des Romains.”<sup>108</sup> This led not only to a search for architectural models within classicism, but also to a view of architecture strongly grounded in a Romantic relationship with the landscape. The contact with Ritter and the intellectual circle around him fostered these ideas in Jeanneret, and would lead him to visit the Balkans in 1911. That this visit was framed by Ritter is revealed by the enthusiasm Jeanneret nurtured for their landscape and peasant life, seeing the Balkans, as Passanti has put it, through the rela-

<sup>106</sup> Sitte, *City Planning*, 141.

<sup>107</sup> On *La Voile Latine* see Alain Clavien, *Les Helvétistes : Intellectuels et politique en Suisse romande au début du siècle* (Lausanne : Société d’histoire de la Suisse romande, Editions d’en bas, 1993).

<sup>108</sup> Jules Cougnard, “Echos de partout,” *Semaine Littéraire*, 31 May 1902, quoted in Clavien, *Helvétistes*, 70. Cougnard was a participant of the movement.

tionship of people and their artifacts.<sup>109</sup>

By the time Jeanneret met him, Ritter had just published the novel *L'Entêtement slovaque*. Jeanneret was impressed by this book, which he read in the summer 1910 along with *Leurs lys et leurs roses*, also by Ritter.<sup>110</sup> In *L'Entêtement slovaque*, Ritter sees in Slovakia a Rousseauian peaceful existence, an ideal state of humankind and an “original” relationship between life, natural phenomena, and religion. The Slovak landscape—“un premier avant-goût de l’Orient”—is described as “ces pays montueux, où la plaine se décide inopinément à se faire montagne, et où les caractères sont en harmonie avec l’énergie lente des avant-plans et la profondeur des horizons.”<sup>111</sup> We are reminded (as Jeanneret would have been) of the undulating fields of Galluzzo enclosed by the Apennines, Schuré’s description of Jerusalem as a city embodying a secret sense of the future, dominated by the two domes and bounded by the Moab’s ridge, or Burckhardt’s Mediterranean landscape dominated by the silhouette of the mountains. In this focus on a pure original way of life, in a peaceful relationship with nature, Jeanneret could recognize both the imagery of the Rousseauian Swiss and of Schuré’s *Sanctuaires*.

In October 1910, already in Berlin but before starting work in Behrens’s office, Jeanneret started reading A. Cingria-Vaneyre’s *Les Entretiens de la Villa du Rouet*.<sup>112</sup> A significant contribution of this book may be characterized as a *new Swiss way of seeing*, to use Hans Jost’s words: a new Swiss vision of the land and nation connecting industrialization and the enlarged consideration of space portrayed from high vantage points in Swiss painting.<sup>113</sup> For Jeanneret, Cingria meant the reconciling of an idealized Mediterranean landscape with technological progress and, above all, with the forms of classical architecture, understood through this semi-godly *way of seeing*.

The notions of modernism and progress surface in Cingria’s descriptions of fu-

109 See Passanti, “Vernacular,” 439-444.

110 William Ritter, *L'Entêtement slovaque* (Paris : Bibliothèque de l'Occident, 1910) ; idem., *Leurs lys et leurs roses* (Paris : Mercure de France, 1903); Jeanneret to Ritter, 6 September 1910.

111 Ritter, *L'Entêtement slovaque*, 5, 8.

112 A. Cingria-Vaneyre, *Les Entretiens de la Villa du Rouet : essais dialogués sur les arts plastiques en Suisse romande* (Geneve: A. Julien, 1907). The influence of this book was first discussed by Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 83-91. Advised by Ritter, Jeanneret bought a copy in October 1910 and finished reading it in the following month. See Jeanneret to Ritter, October/November 1910. By 1916, Cingria remained a major influence on Jeanneret. See, for instance, Jeanneret to Perret, 19 May 1916, repr. in *Lettres à Perret*, 170.

113 Jost has seen in the encounter with the immeasurable lit landscape portrayed through a demiurgic panoramic aerial perspective repeatedly explored in Swiss painting a new way of seeing, a new vision of land and Swiss nation characterized by a perspective envisaging an enlarged consideration of space, and operating at the concrete as well as at the symbolic level. He associates this *new Swiss way of seeing* with the context of the progressive industrialization and scientific and technological progress, which had become major national assets. In the second half of the century, art and science were both seen as essential vehicles for expressing the symbolic national imagery, as shown by the numbers of exhibitions of art and industry. This technological progress had led to changes in perception of nature and the land, such as those offered to a traveler from the deck of a lake-bound steamboat, described as a procession of framed views, or those offered from a suspension bridge, providing a new hovering vantage point. Jost, “Nation, Politics, and Art,” 13, 19-21.

ture railroad trains, tunnels, iron viaducts and bridges crossing the valleys and mountains—"the dreams of the beauties of the future"—all in an ideal landscape seen from a distant, isolated "look-out post" (*poste de vigie*).<sup>114</sup> In this image of a harmonious relationship between the landscape, modern infrastructures, and the motion of modern life, one easily senses the formal consonance between topography and the winding motion of trains, for instance. Turner has stressed that Cingria's view was in line with Jeanneret's "vague Romantic conception of the 'art of tomorrow' [and] conviction that it will be created by isolating oneself in ecstatic meditation (*sic.*)" An annotation in Jeanneret's copy of Cingria's book starts thus: "Vive le modernism. C'est beau, c'est juste, c'est vivant ! Cependant si le poste de vigie est belle évocation, mon esprit, mes besoins, 'monacals' me font redouter la cime envahie."<sup>115</sup>

No such conflict mars Cingria's pairing of Classical architecture and the "Latin" landscape." Addressing the need to create an artistic identity of the "Suisse-romande" based on graeco-latin Classicism, Cingria establishes the Swiss geographic affinities not so much with Greece or Italy, which he considers too perfect, but mainly with the "Byzantine landscape" of Constantinople, "terre absolument classique" which only differs from the "Suisse-romande" in the red tone of the soil.<sup>116</sup> It is these affinities that, according to Cingria, justify the search for a simple, regular architecture, Classical in nature. Just as "mountainous Greece" had created the Doric order, he argues, so the Jura landscape asks for a calm and regular architecture, with long, powerful, and tranquil colonnades ornamenting its valleys. In these arguments, Cingria proposes a comprehensive understanding of architecture and landscape through form. They establish a symbiotic relationship in which architecture responds and complements the landscape and the landscape endows architecture with an element of Sublimity: "Et puis, comme art, dans les montagnes étrangères, l'architecture qui s'élève des rocs, reçoit en échange de l'ornement qu'elle leur apporte, comme un élément de sublimité qui l'embellit à son tour."<sup>117</sup> The archetype of this exchange is the Doric Greek, to which are added cases such as the sacred chapels of the Italian Alps composed of colonnades and domes.

Cingria's call for an architecture based on the simple forms, straight lines and right angles of Classicism is further expanded by asserting that the new architectural expression of the "Suisse-romande" should not be based solely on cubic masses, as in the work of the Berliner architects, but should establish a dialogue between straight

114 Cingria, *Les Entretiens*, 30.

115 Jeanneret, quoted in Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 89-90.

116 Cingria, *Les Entretiens*, 254-55. The family of Cingria's father lived in Constantinople, and he had traveled throughout Italy, Germany and Turkey from 1898 to 1901. Clavier, *Helvétistes*, 62.

117 Cingria, *Les Entretiens*, 262.

and simple curved forms. For Jeanneret, whose education had been engaged in the search for a regional architectural style of the Jura, this meant the recasting of this search in classicist terms, conceived as formal accordance between the natural and the manmade. Moreover, this formal relationship entails the comprehensive territorial scale of a panoramic bird's-eye-view.

Cingria must have reminded Jeanneret of Schuré's idea that the landscape can be built or transformed by men, as the Greeks did by spreading evocative symbols throughout the Mediterranean: "La poésie grecque, inspirée des sanctuaires ou guidée par sa merveilleuse intuition, a peuplé la Méditerranée de symboles parlantes, de la Phénicie aux colonnes d'Hercule."<sup>118</sup> Criticizing the excessive importance assigned to the influence of geography on civilization, society, religion and art, Schuré asserts that the opposite is equally true, since nature is constantly transformed by man, his work and thought. In this sense, landscape also reflects each given culture.<sup>119</sup> In this double interaction between the artistic production of a given culture and the geographic characteristics of the site it inhabits, Schuré suggests that a universal symbolic language must govern the construction of every landscape, shaping a comprehensive scenario for life's entirety. This idea is framed by the aspiration to recover a universal religion in which all branches of religion find their common roots.

The consequences of these readings will become clear during the journey to the East. An example of the association between landscape forms and architectural form is Jeanneret's view of the Byzantine and Turkish domes as extensions of the hilltops. Underlying this formal association of Classical forms and Mediterranean landscape is a fundamental change in Jeanneret at the aesthetic and philosophical levels. In aesthetic terms, Jeanneret is no longer thinking of landscape through hidden mathematical or geometric rules underlying nature, as he had at the school of arts, but through forms of hills and valleys. One could say that an idealized Mediterranean landscape is seen through the aesthetic category of volume associated with the simple forms of Classical architecture. In philosophical terms, Jeanneret has shifted from a Ruskinian nature seen as God's creation to Schuré's pagan relationship with a sacred nature—a shift which had started in Vienna. Jeanneret not only sees the Byzantine and Turkish domes as extensions of the hilltops; he also calls them the "belly of Mother Earth."<sup>120</sup>

If we keep in mind the German discourse on form, this approach to the landscape means the interpretation of nature through its ideal forms. Schmarsow, for instance, argued that, through a basic law of the human mind, man seeks to promote order in the external world. His mathematical thinking and tendency towards organization

118 Schuré, *Santuaires*, 309.

119 *Ibid.*, 316-317.

120 The journey to the East will be discussed in the next chapter.

leads him to translate the *inner intuition* of landscape into regular forms, simplifying them and regularizing their lines in his works, for “the ideal in the mind is always pure form.” Denis also had expressed this idea in his writings and had praised the Mediterranean landscape, defining art as the “sanctification of nature” or extolling the beauty of the perfect forms of the Earth in Italian landscape.<sup>121</sup> As for Jeanneret, it is perhaps his acquaintance with the work of the Parisian sculptor Maillol— a paradigmatic example of the Romantic approach to classicist form via an idealized Mediterranean—that best expresses his changing attitude towards the landscape form.

Partially because of Ritter, Jeanneret’s interest in French art now definitely went to the Symbolist movement.<sup>122</sup> Its association with life, nature, and art is expressed in a passage of the introduction of the manuscript of “La Construction des villes,” in which Jeanneret emphatically wrote of the need for a return to nature following the path laid out by the “impressionist painters, writers, symbolists” with their “return to the contact with the Earth, the brutal material.”<sup>123</sup> In other words, Jeanneret seeks a renewal of society through the recovering of a primitive existence.

By the middle of January 1911 Jeanneret had definitely adopted the discourse on simple forms, writing enthusiastically to L’Eplattenier about volume, rhythm, and light, the joy of form and delight of sight:

“... la plastique est insuffisante et il vous manque de connaître la nouvelle tendance d’aujourd’hui, celle qui, - comme les nouveau ordonnateurs en peinture bâtissant dès aujourd’hui sur les décombres qu’a semés le juvénile impressionnisme, - s’en vient créer les volumes qui jouent sous la lumière en rythmes à base géométrique, joie de la forme enfin retrouvée pour le régal des yeux, et que permit la bataille que gagna Rodin et qui finira pour lui par un Waterloo.”<sup>124</sup>

In this same letter to L’Eplattenier Jeanneret mentions, among the artists of the Salon des Indépendants represented in the German Secession exhibition, the names of Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, and van Gogh. Rodin’s absence had been compensated by the “naïf plastic sensual forms” of the work of a sculptor X (Maillol), conceived by reason and intuition.<sup>125</sup> The mention of the sensual forms of Maillol’s work, whose art had as its main subject the female body, contrasts with the ethereal quality of Chavannes’s

121 Schmarsow, “Architectural Creation,” 287-288; Denis, *Théories*, 12, 146, *passim*.

122 Symbolist art had been a theme of discussion with Ritter since the beginning of their friendship. See, for instance, Jeanneret to Ritter, 21 June 1910.

123 “Déjà les peintres impressionnistes, les littérateurs, symbolistes avaient ébranlé l’édifice routinier. Quittant les Champs morbidement Elyséens où s’adonnait l’art, la fin du XIX siècle reprit le contact avec la terre, la brutale matière.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 252.

124 Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 16 January 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 252.

125 *Ibid.*, 255. Passanti has pointed out that it is clear from the context of the letter that this sculptor X, whose name he had forgotten, was Maillol, who was much admired in Behrens’s office. Passanti, “Architecture,” 290n74.



paintings. Denis's writings provide us with the key to unlocking the meaning underlying Jeanneret's praise for Maillol.

Denis, as already mentioned, believed that simple forms correspond to specific emotions in ways explainable by reason and intuition, an assertion that broadly permeates his writings. By the end of the nineteenth century he turned to classicism, bringing the association between simple forms and emotional response into the realm of Classical forms.<sup>126</sup> In 1905 he wrote an essay on Maillol comparing him to the "immense glory" of Rodin, whose dynamic beauty (*beauté dynamique*) and character of expression had an influence comparable to Wagner's.<sup>127</sup> In this essay, Denis expresses the view that medieval art was a legacy of classical art, seeing the passion for nature in Christianity as part of the inheritance of antiquity. Both the Romanesque and the Classical had "realized ideal types of humanity through the plenitude of form," a form inspired in the numinous natural world.<sup>128</sup> And yet, Denis draws a significant difference between Medieval and Classical art when he speaks of Maillol's holistic approach to the landscape and associates it with the sacred imagery of pagan religion. Maillol's profound sentiment of form, he holds, is essentially Classical: the sexuality of his female bodies endows his work with a sensuality that is more Classical than Christian; their stylized forms are comparable to those of Mother Earth.<sup>129</sup>

Denis further defines the Classical essence of Maillol, characterizing him as a "Classical primitive" (*un primitif classique*). Maillol is Classical, he explains, because his art is one of synthesis, condensing and reducing the infinite relationships perceivable in nature to a small number of simple, concise, and clear forms. By creating an

**126** Denis turn to classicism had been formalized in the article "Les Arts à Rome ou la méthode classique" (1898), as noted in Passanti, "Architecture," 290n70. In this essay he posited the classicist nature of Symbolism arguing that Symbolism "était la tentative d'art la plus strictement scientifique, appuyée sur la correspondance entre les formes et les émotions, c'est-à-dire sur une vérité confirmée à la fois par la tradition et par l'expérience. 'Pour toutes les idées claires, a dit Puvis de Chavannes, il existe une pensée plastique qui les traduit. Mais les idées nous arrivent le plus souvent emmêlées et troubles ... Alors je cherche un spectacle qui la traduise avec exactitude ... C'est là du symbolisme ...'." Denis, "Les Arts à Rome ou la méthode classique," in *Théories*, 51.

**127** Denis, "Aristide Maillol" (1905), in *Théories*, 235-244.

**128** "Le Christianisme ... éveilla la passion de la nature : l'art du Moyen-Age, tour à tour mystique et sensuel, eut le sens très vif de ce qui est charmant dans les productions de la terre. Les chefs-d'œuvre de notre statuaire du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle sont en tout comparable aux chefs-œuvre du V<sup>e</sup> siècle grec ... Je ne sais pas si Maillol synthétise à la façon des Grecs ou bien des Gothiques : mais certainement j'aperçois chez lui ce goût décidé de la nature et de la vie individuelle qu'il traduit ... En lui se concilient deux traditions successives, le V<sup>e</sup> grec et le XIII<sup>e</sup> chrétien, deux arts qui ont réalisé des types idéaux d'humanité, par la plénitude de la forme." Denis, "Aristide Maillol," 238-239.

**129** "C'est aussi le secret de la sensualité plus grecque que chrétienne, c'est-à-dire plus sexuelle, où son art se complait. Les nuques bombées, les cuisses grasses, les rondes épaules, la douceur des ventres, les seins gonflés, son ciseau s'attarde à détailler tous les charmes du corps féminin ... Muses charnelles et saines, que leurs attitudes nonchalantes rapprochent de la Terre mère, qui parfois se dressent sans mouvement dans l'éclat de leur nudité : charnelles architectures qui seraient froides sans le frémissement d'épiderme, l'indécision du geste et la tendresse que leur confère l'exquise gaucherie de Maillol." Denis, "Aristide Maillol," 241.

Note that the role of pagan religion in the development of a "Classical morality and psychology" had been discussed by Denis since his turn to classicism. See idem, "Les Arts à Rome ou la méthode classique," 54-56.

“art of formulas” through instinct, he reduces the viewer’s sensations to the essence. Like the Classical artists of the school of Phidias, he intelligibly takes the natural elements out of an ideal nature reworking them in his own image; he searches for an objective beauty informed by reason, displaying the ideal beauty of objects. But he is also a primitive, Denis continues, for he shares with the primitives a simple *métier* in which everything proceeds from the experience of the hands. Not trusting in science, it is through this *métier* (intuition) that he reworks nature’s forms. If he sometimes approaches the Greek contemporaries of Phidias, it is not through intellectual reasoning but because he “directly feels” like them.<sup>130</sup>

Jeanneret could find here Schuré’s ideas on the recovery of an original synthesis of science and religion, and he would write on Maillol’s work exactly in the same terms of Denis—an art conceived by reason and intuition. And here too, we see the consequences in the journey to the East. In September 1911, he compares two Greek women to Caryatids, whose bodies Maillol would turn into earth (*terre*), and writes of an archaic terracotta of round forms he had bought, calling it “ma Maillol.”<sup>131</sup> In associating Maillol both to an archaic Mediterranean artifact and to the Greek Caryatids, Jeanneret was thinking of him as a primitive and as a Classical, that is, as a “Classical primitive.” This means that, for Jeanneret, Classical went beyond the Graeco-roman-centered discourse and was associated with primitive. But in contrast with the vague notion of primitive of his early years in La Chaux-de-Fonds, primitive was now deeply informed by the Romantic discourse that he had encountered in Schuré, Ritter, Cingria, and Denis. For him, now, the essential forms of a hill and a dome are comparable because architecture, as art, takes form out of an ideal landscape through reason and intuition, partaking of its holistic dimension; it becomes an embodiment of the divine immanence of landscape, associated with the pagan myth of Mother Earth. Classical architecture is the expression of an ideal state of humankind and of an “original” relationship between life, the natural phenomena, and religion.

Associated with Jeanneret’s changing attitude towards architectural form and landscape between 1907 and 1911, then, there is a gradual progression from a vague idea of a mythic South, largely romanticized by literature, towards a more specific Romantic philosophical position that Jeanneret had been nurturing since the reading of Schuré. Schuré’s arguments on a renewal of Christianity through the recovering of a pagan interaction between man and the outer world express the post-enlightenment wish to close the gap between life and art and overcome the Cartesian division between spirit and matter. This Romantic search, within which men like Ritter and

130 Denis, “Aristide Maillol,” 242-44.

131 See Jeanneret to Ritter, 10 September 1911.

Cingria must be positioned, led to an anthropological approach that associated human character with the cultural and geographic context. Both art and mythology were seen as spontaneous productions of common people resulting from, and genuinely expressing, their interaction with the outer world. The model for the modern recovery of an integrated state of humanity rested in an idealized imagery of the Mediterranean pagan cultures, landscape, and symbols. Their art and myths were the expression of an idealized primitive existence and the blurred frontiers of mind and matter that allegedly characterized it.

Cingria and Maillol illustrate how, through Ritter and the intellectual circle around him, Jeanneret acquired a comprehensive view of architecture and landscape encompassing formal associations and a philosophical-existential meaning. Conceived by reason and intuition, Classical architecture could not be thought of without its connections with the landscape. For Jeanneret, the experience of architecture also became a lived experience of the landscape.

#### ARCHETYPAL NARRATIVE: THE ACROPOLIS

Having in mind this changing attitude towards Classical architecture and landscape form and the philosophical world-view associated with it, I would like to suggest that Jeanneret conceptualized this lived experience of an idealized Mediterranean world as a comprehensive narrative merging the natural and the manmade. The paradigm of such merger, for Jeanneret, will be the Athenian Acropolis that he will visit during the journey to the East. It was however in Germany that he constructed the mental framework through which he will experience the Acropolis in his 1911 visit.

Discussion of Jeanneret's approach to the Acropolis must begin with Sitte, through whom Jeanneret came to think of the Acropolis as an enclosed space enriched by sculptural and architectural volumes. Three main examples frame Sitte's discussion of squares, the Pompeian Forum, the Athenian Acropolis, and the Piazza dei Miracoli in Pisa.<sup>132</sup> The Acropolis is discussed through the same conceptual model of the other two, as an enclosed space enriched by sculptural and architectural volumes experienced through a narrative—the Panathenaea procession:

“The ultimate realization of this idea is to be perceived, however, in the great temple precincts of Greek antiquity at Eleusis, Olympia, Delphi, and other places. There archi-

**132** According to Sitte, it was not only the Athenian Acropolis that should be looked at as an ideal and source of inspiration, as Sitte proposes to demonstrate that the most essential compositional ideas and artistic principles were preserved “even up to our own day, and it would take only an auspicious touch to put them into effect again.” Such was the case of Pisa and Pompeii, and even the Certosa at Pavia, a case which, according to him, comes close to the purity of Pisa. Sitte, *City Planning*, 150, 153.

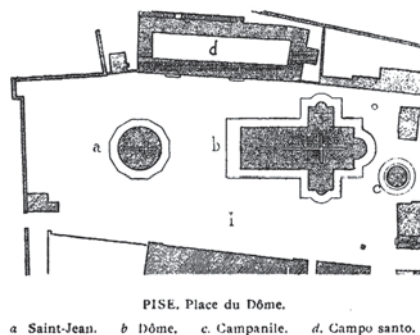


FIG. 171 Pisa. Piazza dei Miracoli. Plan. From Martin, *L'Art de bâtir les villes*.

itecture, sculpture, and painting are united into an artistic synthesis [*Gesamtwerk*] that has the sublimity and grandeur of a great tragedy or a mighty symphony. The consummate example of this is offered by the Acropolis in Athens, the top of which, unencumbered in the middle and encircled by high ramparts, presents the customary pattern. The lower entrance gate, the monumental staircase, and the marvelously wrought Propylaea form the first movement of this symphony composed in marble, gold and ivory, bronze, and polychromy; the temples and monuments of the central space are the very myths of the Hellenic people turned into stone. The most elevated poetry and thought has found spatial embodiment here at this hallowed spot.”<sup>133</sup>

Sculptures and buildings are here described in similar terms and associated with the unfolding ascending experience. The reference to an enclosed space ordered by architectural forms is expanded in the case of the Piazza dei Miracoli (fig. 171), associated with an experience of seclusion:

“The Piazza del Duomo in Pisa is such a masterpiece of city building—an acropolis for Pisa. Here is brought together everything that the burghers of the town were able to produce in the way of large-scale and lavish churchly art: the magnificent cathedral, the campanile, the baptistery, the incomparable Campo Santo; anything profane or commonplace is excluded. This plaza, secluded from the world yet decked out abundantly with the most noble works of the human spirit, produces an overpowering effect ... There is nothing here to distract our attention; nothing that reminds us of the daily hustle and bustle. In contemplating the venerable façade of the cathedral, we are not annoyed by any obtrusive little tailor shop, by the confusion of a café, or by the shouts of drivers and porters. Peace prevails, and the totality of effect assists our spirit to enjoy and comprehend the works of art accumulated in this place.”<sup>134</sup>

While the Acropolis and Pisa express more clearly the combination of space and volume, Pompeii, we have seen, is praised for its space-form and for displaying the confrontation of geometry and Mediterranean landscape after ascending to the top of the temple of Jupiter—a point of view explored by Jeanneret in his 1911 sketches.

133 Ibid., 150.

134 Ibid., 152-53.

Although, in contrast with his comments on Pompeii, Sitte leaves out the experience of the landscape view from the Acropolis, this view was a common theme in Romantic literature by the beginning of the century, and was available to Jeanneret from numerous sources. One of them, which Jeanneret certainly came to know through Ritter, was the book *En Grèce par monts et par vaux*, with photographs by the Swiss photographer Frédéric Boissonnas and text by Daniel Baud-Bovy. Printed by Boissonnas in August 1910, it was reviewed by Ritter in *La Semaine Littéraire* of January 1911. Another review was Léandre Vaillat's, which had come out in *Les Arts et les Artistes* of March 1910, before the book did. Ritter wrote in every issue of that journal, so he certainly had a copy of Vaillat's review, which was illustrated by two of Boissonnas's images of the Acropolis.<sup>135</sup>

The text by Baud-Bovy, one of the founding members of *La Voile Latine*, compares the natural beauties of Greece with those of Switzerland, extolling the relationship between the Greek monuments and the landscape. The association between architecture and landscape is easily sensed in Boissonnas's photographs, as pointed out in Vaillat and Ritter's reviews. Ritter quotes Ad. Michaelis, who had written that Boissonnas photographs reconcile a "poetic expression and an absolute accuracy of the image," arguing that they provide the means to examine the Hellenic landscape and monuments from the double angle of accuracy and poetry.<sup>136</sup> Developing the argument, Ritter writes on Boissonnas's approach to the sites, the choice of the right moment and the *mise en place* of the motif, the powerful result of which equals and sometimes surpasses the work of great artists such as Rottmann, Boecklin, or Hermann Urban. The work of Boissonnas, he concludes, provide us with the "incomparable substance," with "a lesson of history and art, and with a matter to philosophize as well."

Vaillat, who also notes that the photographs enliven the natural charm of the site through the accurate choice of the viewpoint, time of the day and light, quotes Baud-Bovy's account of his encounter with the Acropolis. The first point to be noted is Baud-Bovy's choice of a high vantage point providing an enlarged panoramic view to first evaluate the Acropolis and the surrounding landscape from afar. Mentioning his habits of mountaineer, he chooses to climb the Pnyx. The second point is that, through

<sup>135</sup> Frédéric Boissonnas, *En Grèce par monts et par vaux* (Geneva: Boissonnas, 1910) ; Ritter, "Une grande œuvre de M. Frédéric Boissonnas," *La Semaine Littéraire (Genève)* XIX/888 (7 Jan. 1911): 6-8 ; Léandre Vaillat, "De la photographie," *Les Arts et les Artistes*, Tome 10 (Oct. 1909-March 1910): 128-133. For this section I am particularly in debt to Passanti, who called my attention to this literature and its implications for Jeanneret. More recently, Dumont has noted that Jeanneret became acquainted with Boissonnas's book through Ritter. Dumont, "Inspirateur caché," 55-56.

<sup>136</sup> "... le professeur Ad. Michaelis ... félicite M. Boissonnas d'avoir 'pu réunir une expression poétique à une absolue exactitude de l'image'. Ce serait un excellent plan d'article d'examiner le paysage et les monuments helléniques à travers les illustrations ... de ce plus beau des livres ... sous le double angle de l'exactitude et de la poésie." Ritter, "Une grande œuvre," 6.





FIG. 172 Boissonnas. *Le Parthénon après l'orage*. From *En Grèce par monts et par vaux*.

this *swiss way of seeing*, he describes a divine, ordered landscape of mountains and sea converging on one central point, the Acropolis. Landscape enhances architecture, “le chef-d’œuvre que mettait en valeur ce beau cadre.”<sup>137</sup> The account reads:

“Ce premier matin, par une habitude chère aux montagnards, afin d’étudier le merveilleux rocher que nous allons gravir, nous nous rendîmes d’abord sur la Pnyx. Là s’assemblait le peuple d’Athènes ; ses orateurs franchissaient les gradins taillés dans le roc, posaient le pied sur cette tribune sculptée pour eux par les dieux ; ils tournaient le dos à la mer onduleuse, au Pirée, à l’aspect enivrant se mouvait sans effort [sic.]. On aurait pu croire ne posséder qu’un seul sens : la vue, mais complète accrue, apte à saisir les plus subtils rapports. Le regard s’élançait dans cette limpidité comme un oiseau dans la fraîcheur matinale ; il allait des montagnes à la mer, se posait ébloui sur l’Acropole, reprenait son essor. La mer, de couleur changeante, se fondait avec les sommets roses de l’Argolide, bordait d’une frange céruléenne les gradins d’Egine, les côtes escarpées de Salamine, et cernait d’indigo le promontoire du Pirée. A cette ligne nette ... se reliait l’hémicycle des montagnes prochaines ...”<sup>138</sup>

In this description, the Acropolis and the Attic landscape emerge as the paradigm of the accord between architecture and landscape. One of the images of the Acropolis by Boissonnas published by Vaillat, *Le Parthénon après l’orage*, is an oblique view taken from the interior of the Parthenon (fig. 172). The columns of white marble, lit by the sun, thrust upwards in vivid contrast with the dark sky, framing the conic peak of the Licavitus with the silhouette of the Pentelikon in the background. Architectural and landscape forms are set in confrontation, while the reflections on the floor bring our mind back to Jeanneret’s comments of the Siegessäule in Berlin and to some

137 “Et toutes ces lignes, et toutes ces clartés s’entendaient à reconduire sans cesse le regard vers le même point central, vers le chef-d’œuvre que mettait en valeur ce beau cadre : le rocher violet de l’Acropole. Ses temples dressaient des colonnes d’améthyste que le soleil encore bas enchâssait d’or, et l’élan du paysage divin aboutissait et se rassemblait au front du Parthénon.” Baud-Bovy, quoted in Vaillat, “De la photographie,” 130.

138 Baud-Bovy, quoted in *ibid.*, 129.



FIG. 173 Boissonnas. *Salamine du haut des propylées (soleil couchant)*. From *En Grèce par monts et par vaux*.

of Jeanneret's watercolors. In a second photograph—*Salamine du haut des propylées (soleil couchant)*—Boissonnas portrays the Attic plain and the temple of Wingless Victory (fig. 173). Vaillat argues that Boissonnas achieved a “tableau complet,” framing the temple, the immense horizon, and the radiant light. More than just juxtaposing the cubic form of the temple and the landscape, this image displays the direction of the temple, projected towards the plain and the horizontal line of the sea—a direction suggested by Baud-Bovy (*il allait des montagnes à la mer*). Moreover, this direction is first established by the landscape (the Attic plain enclosed by mountains on three sides and opening to the sea on the fourth) and the Parthenon's axis.

The notion of direction resurfaces once more in Baud-Bovy, this time determining the experience: “Il faut avoir vu l'Acropole et la revoir ainsi, après des années, du pont d'un navire, pour mesurer, à l'émotion qui vous étreint alors, l'intensité des joies qu'elle vous a données et le lyrisme des expériences qu'elle vous apporte.”<sup>139</sup> Baud-Bovy's pairing of the Acropolis and the deck of a ship, later retaken by Jeanneret in his *Voyage d'Orient*, reminds us of Semper's analogy with a ship to characterize directional organization and the notions of volition and unity of purpose and content. For him, we have seen, the best example is “Athena's crowning pediment” embodying “the dominance of proportion, the quintessence of symmetry, and the reflection of the approaching sacrificial procession.”<sup>140</sup> This certainly reminded Jeanneret of Schuré, who had described the Acropolis in similar terms: “L'Attique ouverte à tous les vents, s'avance comme la proue d'un navire dans la mer Egée et commande en reine au cycle des îles, blanches sirènes assises sur le bleu foncé des flots.”<sup>141</sup>

Schuré's account of the Acropolis is characterized by three main stages: the pan-

139 Baud-Bovy, quoted in Ritter, “Une grande œuvre,” 8.

140 See chapter 1.

141 Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 401.

oramic view over the Acropolis and the Attic landscape seen from the top of one of the surrounding mountains; the depiction of the Acropolis's rhythmic ascent; the final axial view over the landscape from its elevated plateau. In his account of the arrival in Athens by road from the Piraeus, Schuré briefly mentions the glance over the acropolis and the skeleton of the Parthenon on the top of it. Before visiting it, he first climbed the Pentelikon, depicting the idyllic sacred landscape of Athens: the Attic plain, surrounded by mountains on three sides and opening to the sea on the fourth. Only then does he return to the Acropolis, describing the sacred route crossing the agora and climbing the hill along the spiraling path, punctuated by terraces, statues and monuments, followed by the Propylaea, the temple of Wingless Victory on the side, the statue of Pallas in the foreground next to it, the Erectheion beyond, and the Parthenon to the right, looming against the sky. Like in most of the contemporary descriptions, the processional ceremony of the national feasts is described until reaching the interior of the Parthenon. But then he adds:

“Pour sentir à quel point le sanctuaire s'accorde avec la terre qui l'environne, il faut regarder l'Attique du haut des Propylées ou du péristyle du Parthénon. Alors se révèle l'harmonie d'un pays qui semble modelé par les dieux. La mer enveloppe les rives de Phalère et du Pyrée comme un beau lac. Les plans successifs du paysage ne sont que les décors de la cité. Chaque montagne a sa figure propre et se distingue nettement des autres ; mais embrassées d'un coup d'œil elles forment un ensemble merveilleux. L'Acrocorinthe se hisse sur son isthme pour regarder sa sœur l'Acropole. La Côte fuyante de l'Argolide, qui se perd dans l'Archipel, invite aux voyages marins. Enfin, les lignes grandioses de l'Hymette, du Pentélique et du Parnès protègent l'Attique comme des forteresses naturelles. Si l'on se retire dans la cella du temple, on aperçoit le golfe et l'île de Salamine par la porte du Parthénon, et cela produit un effet unique. C'est la nature débarrassée de tout ce qu'elle a d'étranger et hostile à l'homme, emprisonnée dans un cadre de beauté. Jamais aucune ville, aucun sanctuaire, aucun temple n'ont rendu ainsi, par leur formes et leur perspectives, la pensée même de la civilisation.”<sup>142</sup>

In this passage, the view from the Parthenon towards the sea offers a unique experience. Underlying it is not only the idea of an axial accordance between architecture and landscape, but also the idea of a comprehensive experience realigning man with this ordering axis—a narrative starting with the panoramic distant view offering a synthesis of architecture and landscape, followed by the meandering rhythmic ascent, and ending in the “effet unique” of the axial view towards the sea from the Parthenon's cell. The overall axial order established by the Parthenon and the landscape operate a synthesis of the natural and the manmade, the experience of which is ultimately determined by the vertical and horizontal axes.

142 Ibid., 210-220.

Through Baud-Bovy and Boissonnas, Jeanneret could thus think of the Acropolis as a place inextricably bound with the landscape, both as a place to be experienced from afar and as a place from which to experience the landscape and its axial connection with the Parthenon. Through Schuré, he could easily connect these two experiential steps with the common account of the ritual ascent of the Panathenaea procession, and think of a comprehensive bodily experience of this unity of natural and manmade. As we will see in the next chapter, Jeanneret will follow this three-step experience in his 1911 visit, first approaching the Acropolis and the Attic plain from afar and looking at the Acropolis through the experiences of prospect, shelter and expanse; also, he will give particular importance to the overall directional accord.

This narrative consisted not only of a bodily aesthetic experience, but also of a fundamental spiritual one. It was also through Schuré that Jeanneret could reinforce the association between axial accordance and spiritual experience. The accordance of the Acropolis and the Attic landscape described by Baud-Bovy and Boissonnas's images would certainly have brought Jeanneret's mind back also to Schuré's description of a primitive interaction in ancient Egypt between man and nature, displayed through abstract symbols, vertical axis and horizontal direction pointing to the rising sun. Schuré himself provided the association of Athens and Egypt:

“L'accord merveilleux composé ici par le paysage, l'architecture, la statuaire et la poésie nous révèlent ce que fut Pallas dans l'histoire d'Athènes. Le sphinx qui forme le cimier de son casque dénote encore son origine égyptienne. Issue de l'Isis céleste ou Nature primordiale, Pallas fut conçue dès l'origine par ceux qui intuèrent son culte comme l'un des attributs divins : Sagesse – Providence. Elle se distingue absolument des déesses asiatiques et phéniciennes qui symbolisent la nature inférieure. Son essence est purement intellectuelle ... D'autres peuples adorèrent la Nature féconde qui enfante et dévore les êtres ; Athènes choisit pour déesse la Pensée qui dompte la Nature.”<sup>143</sup>

Jeanneret could thus read the axis of the Parthenon as a legacy of the Egyptian symbols, facing a nature modeled by the gods. As Schuré put it: “Quand nous allons visiter la Grèce en ruines, n'est-ce pas toujours le grand Pan que nous cherchons?”<sup>144</sup> It is worth remembering that, for Schuré, geometry and axial order enact an experience of the Absolute, brought to the realm of ritual through the concept of *life entirety*. In articulating the vertical axis of the Acropolis and the longitudinal axis of the landscape, the Parthenon was comparable to the Egyptian ancient symbols and to Notre-Dame: an architecture merging science and religion, providing the means for an epistemological experience. But here, the diagrammatical reduction into a vertical and

143 Ibid., 219-220.

144 Ibid., 172.

horizontal axis distils the narrative pattern of the Jura landscape into a paradigm: an ascending narrative leading to the Sublime encounter with the horizon.

While we recognize here the experiences of prospect, shelter and expanse of Jeanneret's Jura landscape representations, the narrative structure underlying them is now preceded by a panoramic view providing an enlarged consideration of the natural and the manmade. In narrative terms this works as a kind of pre-recognition of the unity of architecture and landscape which endows the total experience with its deep philosophical meaning. This overall bird's eye view finds a later correspondence in the arrival by plane portrayed in the diorama of the *Ville Contemporaine*, completing the three-step narrative pattern of Le Corbusier's experiential code. With the airplane, Le Corbusier wrote, "the eye now sees in substance what the mind formerly could only subjectively conceive," and once man "has come down to earth his aims and determinations have found a new scale ... One can be lulled and reassured by saying to oneself that in spite of everything a stirring unity will come to prevail by degrees."<sup>145</sup>

Through Schuré, Sitte, Baud-Bovy and Boissonnas, Jeanneret understood that, just as the Athenian Acropolis constitutes the archetype of the accordance between architecture and landscape, so its experience constitutes the archetype of a lived synthesis of nature and manmade, a mental and bodily experience expressed in the form of a narrative. Thus understood, the Acropolis could be elevated to a symbol of an original existence in harmony with the natural world. And, the experience of ascending the Acropolis and encountering the landscape along the axial accordance between architecture and landscape, preceded by the recognition of their unity, could become a model for the renewal of modern man that Le Corbusier will propose in the 1920s. By the end of the German stay, the mental framework of Le Corbusier's ordering code had been thus established—a three-step narrative structure in which architecture realigns man with the world. In following this archetypal narrative structure, Le Corbusier's comprehensive *architectural promenade* remained idealist in its essence; it embodied the Romantic search for merging ritual and life, its existential dimension being ultimately traceable to the wish to recover an original relationship between man and the natural world.

There is no evidence that Jeanneret applied this reasoning to the city at this early stage. But, in its essence, it is this three-step narrative structure that we find in the *Ville Contemporaine* or in the ascending architectural promenade of the *Ville Savoye*, articulated by its guiding axis: a comprehensive narrative displaying the accordance of architectural volume-forms and landscape, leading the inhabitant to the centre of the ordering axis. Also, it is this same ordering axis that we find in the 1922 essay "Archi-

145 Le Corbusier, *Aircraft* (London and New York: The Studio, 1935), fig. 96, 122.



tecture III. Pure creation de l'esprit"—an axis common to the human body and all natural phenomena whose accordance is mediated by architecture oriented accordingly.<sup>146</sup>

#### GESAMKUNSTWERK

Up to this point, this chapter has been looking at the aesthetic categories involved in Jeanneret's readings on urban design; at the significance of the landscape for a comprehensive approach to architecture; and at the suggestion of a comprehensive narrative and archetypal structure underlying the relationships of Acropolis and Attic landscape. In this section, I will focus on the existential nature of the experience that precedes the axial encounter with the landscape from within the enclosed space—that is, on the ascending narrative. For this purpose, I will consider the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Starting by briefly surveying the broad context of this concept, I will chart Jeanneret's gradual exposure to it. This will allow us to better understand the influence of Dalcroze's eurythmics and Hellerau experiments on Jeanneret's interpretation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a collective experience mediated by the body, fusing ritual and life; and it will lead us to Appia's scenic designs and their evocation of Greek architectural landscapes. Appia's designs provided Jeanneret with the articulating structure between Dalcroze, on the one hand, and Schuré, Sitte, and Baud-Bovy on the other, both through the abstract rendering of architectural forms and through the suggestion of an imminent encounter with a mythic landscape.

The late nineteenth-century association of ritual and life involves the kind of dialogue that exists between theatre and life, representation and non representation, figurative and abstract art, and, more broadly, the tension between two world-views: on the one hand, the mechanistic views of the human mind which, extending back to Descartes, explain human emotion and behavior through rational patterns and universal laws of cognition, and on the other hand, the Romantic endeavor to overcome the Cartesian division of spirit and matter, focusing on mystical experience as a way to bridge conscious and subconscious. The interaction of these opposing attitudes characterizes the German nineteenth-century attempts to create a *Kunstwissenschaft*, echoed, for instance, by Jeanneret's search in Notre-Dame for an objective means to a subjective experience.<sup>147</sup> The same attempt to reconcile an idealist worldview with a positivist one characterizes the early-twentieth-century artistic context, the growing interest in spiritualism, and emerging branches of science such as hypnosis, which

<sup>146</sup> I will return to this essay in the concluding chapter.

<sup>147</sup> For the German attempts to create a *Kunstwissenschaft* see Mallgrave and Ikonomidou, introduction to *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 4.

tried to decipher the depths of our inner beings.

The raw material of this debate, so to speak, is the body. It is through the body that spirit and matter can become one. Arthur Schopenhauer expressed this idea in the notion of *will* (*Willen*). Body movements simultaneously constitute an object of knowledge (a representation) and a means to achieve knowledge, for they constitute acts of *will*.<sup>148</sup> Just as *will* can be expressed through rhythm, so rhythmic body movement can connect to the inner nature of man, going beyond mere representation (*Vorstellung*).<sup>149</sup> The late-nineteenth-century theories on Empathy and the debate on the perception of tangible forms through the interaction of the body with the world—dependent on elementary aesthetic feelings of harmony, rhythm and proportion—cannot be fully understood without the Schopenhauerian association between aesthetic experience and the notions of body movement and rhythm.

Similar concerns had already been expressed in France by Diderot in his discussion on the correspondence between body and soul. Looking at the body as a primary vehicle for expression, Diderot claimed that the narrative of a painting could be made manifest through the physiological and psychological content of gesture and pose. Corporality emerges as a reflection of the soul, the *gestes essentiels* constituting a body language expressing basic emotions which words are not capable of expressing. This was also the focus of Diderot's theories about theatre and the notion of "tableaux vivants," corresponding to silent periods of bodily expression alternating with spoken scenes.<sup>150</sup>

**148** In *The World as Will and Representation* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1808), Schopenhauer refutes the notion of the world as a mere object of knowledge, as mere representation (*Vorstellung*) to be reduced to the realm of consciousness. He believes that everything—living beings or phenomena—is a manifestation of a cosmic will to exist (*willen*), the inner nature of things which is unattainable through representation because it surpasses the object of knowledge. Constituting acts of will, Schopenhauer argues, body movements simultaneously constitute an object of knowledge and a means to achieve knowledge. Man is a willing being that experiences will in body actions. The experience of the world is therefore a double experience, that of representation and that of the will. One has an immediate awareness of the inner nature of the self through action, though this awareness cannot be incorporated into categories of knowledge. On Schopenhauer I mainly rely on Rupert Wood, "Language as Will and Representation: Schopenhauer, Austin, and Musicality," *Comparative Literature*, vol. 48, no. 4 (Autumn, 1996): 302-25; Walther R. Volbach, "Time and Space on the Stage," *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2 (May, 1967): 135.

**149** Building upon Friedrich Schiller's call that art imitate the abstract nature of music, Schopenhauer developed his theory about music as a primary art form capable of going beyond representation (*Vorstellung*) and expressing the inner nature of things, i.e., their *will*. In his view, the visual arts provide men with the possibility of pure representation, a representation of the Ideal world. By contrast, the abstract nature of music embodies and expresses will, not depending on the phenomenal world. Rhythm thus emerges as the means by which the visual arts and poetry could express will: "Rhythm is in time what symmetry is in space, division into equal parts corresponding to each other." Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, quoted in Volbach, "Time and Space on the Stage," 135.

**150** On Diderot's theories about art see Dorothy Johnson, "Corporality and Communication: The Gestural Revolution of Diderot, David, and The Oath of the Horatii," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 71, no. 1 (March, 1989): 92-113. For a comprehensive work on Diderot's discourse on body and soul see Caroline Jacop Grapa, *Dans le vif du sujet: Diderot, corps et âme* (Paris: Garnier, 2009). For Diderot, the interpretation of body language is however dependent on the sensorial perception of the viewer. In the entry "corps," in Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751-1772), it is argued that when a body (organic or inorganic) is presented to us,

This interest in the body is intimately related with the growing interest in primitive rituals, which brought the association between corporal expression and spiritual and mystical experience into the realm of the arts. Pantomimic expression emerged as a new possibility for a universal language in the modern world, particularly in stage arts such as drama and ballet, expanding them to the field of ritual. By the turn of the century, drama started to be seen not only as the earliest manifestation of human art, but even as preceding artistic intention. Its cultic origins meant the displacement of the drama's nature. Rather than constituting an art for art's sake—Schopenhauer's *Vorstellung*—drama entailed in its origins an “element of real embodiment,” an immersion in the collective and sacred through which one became one with the world. Primitive rituals, dances, pantomime, and religious ceremonies, but also popular festivities and harvest rituals with pagan roots, provided the theatrical art with a fresh insight into the blurred frontiers between art, religion, and life.<sup>151</sup> It is in this context that, within the Romantic Hellenizing leanings, such a repositioning of drama raised the imagery of the Panathenaea processional festivals to an archetype of ancient rituals fusing representation and life.

Looking at art and myth as spontaneous expressions of common people, the Romantics saw the creation of myth through a *Gesamkunstwerk* collectively experienced as a way to overcome the Cartesian division of spirit and matter.<sup>152</sup> Nietzsche re-centered Schopenhauer's theories in a dual principle of opposing artistic impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian (the beautiful and the sublime). Feeding upon Wilhelm Schlegel, he saw in the Greek tragedy the perfect reconciliation of the Apollinian-Dionysian duality, where man partakes in the *work of art*. Life and representation were originally one. He thus called for “*a re-birth of tragedy*” arising from “the German genius.”<sup>153</sup> It was in Wagner that, at first, he saw the answer to this rebirth.

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our soul elaborates an idea of it through the sensorial perception of its properties, which however does not find a direct correspondence with the body itself. There is therefore a hidden dimension that is dependent and only reachable through our senses/soul. In the same entry, and referring to geometry, *corps* is defined as the phantom of the matter (*phantôme de la matière*).

151 On the theory of the ritual origins of theatre see Julie Stone Peters, “Drama, Primitive Ritual, Ethnographic Spectacle: Genealogies of World Performance (ca. 1890-1910),” *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 1 (March 2009): 67-96.

152 On the German romantic view on the production and reproduction of myths as a means to reconnect German identity see Arvidsson, “Aryan Mythology,” 330-32.

153 Building upon Schopenhauer, both Nietzsche and Wagner saw in music the primal art. In *The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, 1872)*, Nietzsche claimed that the continuous evolution of art is a product of the Apollinian-Dionysian duality, two creative tendencies developed alongside one another and usually in fierce opposition. These tendencies correspond to two distinct ways of experiencing the world, two distinct fundamental states of being. The experience of the plastic Apollonian art is comparable to the experience of dream, or illusion, a contemplative experience in which man is disconnected from the world. Differently, in the Dionysian state that results from music, man connects with the world of the gods, becomes part of the world through the abolition of consciousness. It is a pre-cognitive, or pre-Apollonian ground of existence through which one becomes the *work of art*. In sum, Apollo is the representation of the categories of understanding space and time, whereas Dionysius is the ultimate ground of unity from which all things come, “the dissolution of the individual and his unification with primordial existence.”

Like Schopenhauer's approach to music and Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian duality, Wagner's total work of art aimed at the staging of the absolute, fusing ritual, representation and life. Wagner used the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* to express his will to unify all arts in a theatrical form rooted in Greek tragedy. He sought a new mythology, transforming "dramatic representation into a sacramental event" exalting Germanness and creating "a Christian correlate to ancient Greek drama." He saw his musical drama as festival and civil religion, a collective expression of cultural renewal liberating modern civilization from the enlightenment project through myth. Within such a concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, art is no longer a subject of contemplation. It is a participative activity through which man experiences the absolute in a physical way through the body. Representation becomes embodiment, a living ritual on the verge of becoming life.<sup>154</sup> This aspiration for a collective lived work of art constitutes an important philosophical background of the German debate on town planning that Jeanneret encountered in Sitte, with its call that the city be seen as a collective work of art.

Two more points on Wagner are worth remembering. First, in Wagner's Schopenhauerian approach, the non-visual art of music corresponds to the experience of a pure state of feeling, of a non-visual knowledge of the world and "unity with nature."<sup>155</sup> Involved with this spiritual "unity with nature" is the notion of spiritual transport that Jeanneret referred to when he wrote, from Paris, that music transports us to higher spheres.<sup>156</sup> Second, Wagner's project was part of a broader dream of creating a religion for the "indo-European race" involving German myths, Christian mysticism and Greek religion.<sup>157</sup> These ideas, placing Christian and Greek religious expressions in the lineage of ancient paganism, had first reached Jeanneret through Schuré, as we have seen.

Several episodes illuminate the extent to which Jeanneret was gradually exposed to all of this. A brief survey of these influences must start with the catalogue of the school of arts library, where Jeanneret could find the contemporary concerns on bodily expression and locomotion. Among the regular bibliography on anatomy applied to

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Feeding upon Schlegel's assertion that, in Attic tragedy, the chorus represented "the essence and extract of the crowd of spectators," constituting "the symbol of the mass of the people moved by Dionysian excitement," Nietzsche saw the perfect combination of these two conflicting artistic impulses in Attic tragedy, combining the plastic Apollonian expression—displaying ordered actions in space and time— and the "dancing chorus" which, having evolved out of the Dionysian spirit of music, expressed and re-enacted the pre-cognitive and pre-Apollonian ground of existence unattainable through narrative. See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. W.M. A. Haussmann (London: George Allen & Unwin and New York: MacMillan, 1909), esp. 57-122.

<sup>154</sup> Ryan Minor, "Wagner's Last Chorus: Consecrating Space and Spectatorship in "Parsifal," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (Mar., 2005): 2. In addition see David Roberts, "Staging the Absolute: The Total Work of Art from Wagner to Mallarmé," *Thesis Eleven* no. 86 (August 2006): 90-106.

<sup>155</sup> See Wagner, *Beethoven* 66-67.

<sup>156</sup> Jeanneret to parents, 2 June 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:186.

<sup>157</sup> See Arvidsson, "Aryan Mythology," 327-354.

drawing–section F, “*Enseignements du dessin et des arts appliqués*,” subsection “Anatomie. Expression. Geste”–Jeanneret could find books such as Eadweard Muybridge’s *The Human Figure in Motion* (1901) and *Animals in Motion* (1899), or Charles Rochet, *Traité d’anatomie, d’anthropologie et d’ethnographie appliquées aux Beaux-Arts* (1886), significant for their focus on body locomotion.<sup>158</sup> Rochet, professor of applied anthropology at the Beaux-arts, expresses the contemporary Darwinian concerns with the prototype of male, female and children bodies–to which he attributes precise measures and proportions–and with distinct physical characters which, in different races, vary within the anatomic constitution shared by all humans (variety within unity). At the theoretical level we find Paul Souriau’s *La Beauté rationnelle* in section B, “Esthétique, Philosophie de l’art, Critique d’art,” a book strongly influenced by the German aesthetic theories. Within the wide array of themes, and beyond those on the sensorial aesthetic experience and sexual instinct in art, he discusses the sensorial beauty of geometric form, lines and proportions, the aesthetic value of muscular effort, or the categories of melody, rhythm and harmony in music.<sup>159</sup>

Also figuring in the section on anatomy is Emile Magnin and Fred. Boissonnas’s *Magdeleine: Étude sur le geste au moyen de l’hypnose* (1904). This publication resulted from the 1904 exhibition “La Grèce; Magdeleine G.,” held in Geneva, consisting of the photographs Boissonnas took for Magnin’s *L’Art et l’Hypnose* (1906). To illustrate Magnin’s scientific approach to hypnosis, Boissonnas registered the bodily reactions of Magdeleine G. (Emma Guipet)–a neurasthenic patient of Magnin–to music and poetry under the effect of hypnotic trance (fig. 174, 175). The alleged spontaneity of her “mechanical dances” aroused a wide interest among some strands of medical research, artists such as Rodin or Albert von Keller, and philosophers such as Theodor Lipps, who was developing his second work on Empathy by that time.<sup>160</sup> Incidentally, the artistic background of Magdeleine was concealed: she had studied under Dalcroze and was a follower of Isadora Duncan.

The first point to be made is that Magnin’s focus on body motion by unconscious

**158** See no. 298, 305 and 310 in the catalogue of the art school. Muybridge is also significant for what was his personal quest: that of producing the illusion of motion by means of sequential images. In this particular respect he offers a technological step forward to Töpffer, so to speak, if we think of the latter as Le Corbusier did: a precursor of cinema.

**159** Paul Souriau, *La Beauté rationnelle* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1904). Souriau’s interest in the association between aesthetics and movement is examined in *L’Esthétique du mouvement* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1889), in which he discusses the body movement both as a subject of aesthetic beauty and as the means of perception and aesthetic experience.

**160** Émile Magnin and Fred. Boissonnas’s *Magdeleine: Étude sur le geste au moyen de l’hypnose*, exh. cat. (1904). See no. 304 in the catalogue of the art school. On this book I rely on Céline Eidenbenz, “Hypnosis at the Parthenon: Magdeleine G. Photographed by Fred. Boissonnas,” trans. John Tittensor, *Études photographiques* no. 28 (November 2011): 200-237. Boissonnas photographs were taken between 1903 and 1904. The two primary works by Lipps dealing with empathy are *Raummästhetik und geometrisch-optische Täuschungen* (1893-1897) and *Asthetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst* (1903-1906). Mallgrave and Ikonou, introduction to *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 73n90.





FIG. 174 Boissonnas. Magdeleine G. Illustration of Emile Magnin and Fred. Boissonnas' *Magdeleine. Étude sur le geste au moyen de l'ypnose* (1904)

FIG. 175 Boissonnas. Magdeleine G. (*Chevauchée de la Walkyrie*), 1903.

reaction to music and poetry reflects the contemporary concerns with rhythm (be it of music or poetry) and how, through it, the depths of the non-material world can be reached via the body. The second point, which Jeanneret would hardly miss, is that Magnin and Boissonnas's concern with the relationships between body and "inner self" parallels the contemporary focus on ancient Greece. Boissonnas, the photographer also chosen by Dalcroze to document his teaching method, shared a deep interest in Greece, its art and landscape. He photographed Magdeleine G. in ancient Greek sites, either with loose, wind-blown hair or with Grecian hairstyles and vests, clearly resonating with the poses of Greek sculpture.<sup>161</sup> Boissonnas's images thus explored the links between the obscure connotations of hypnosis and the Hellenizing trends of Romanticism, reflecting the current interest in the body as a vehicle for bridging matter and spirit, as well as the belief in an idealized original state of mankind. As a support for drawing lessons in the school of art, the book was certainly related with the representation of feelings through bodily expression, echoing the eighteenth-century discourse on body language.

An example of how these ideas pervaded Jeanneret's education even below the threshold of conscious awareness is Jørgen Peter Müller, a Danish fitness guru who published a book in 1904 laying out a set of physical exercises to keep a healthy body.

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<sup>161</sup> Magnin believed that Phidias or Praxiteles resorted to hypnotic suggestion to obtain emphatic bodily expressions, while Greek bacchantes and sibyls resorted to trance during their dances and achieved ecstasy by looking fixedly at objects for long periods of time. This connection with antiquity was built upon James Braid, founder of medical hypnosis, who had argued on the association of hypnotic trance and musical effect with the dance of Greek bacchantes. In addition, Magnin also knew Albert de Rochas's *Les Sentiments, la musique et le geste* (1900), a research on the "externalization of sensibility" illustrated with photographs by Nadar depicting hypnotic expressions of the model Lina de Ferkel. See Eidenbenz, "Hypnosis at the Parthenon," 226-227. This illuminates the extent of the association between Hellenizing cultural leanings and the contemporary debate on body and soul.

If you have a tendency to giddiness, do not lean your head backwards, when the body is swung round to the back. Otherwise it looks better for the head to follow the movements of the body. Beginners and delicate people should place the hands on the hips and later on, behind the head, instead of raising the arms. Do not forget to draw your breath freely, through the nose, inhaling as you describe the back half of the circle and exhaling as you swing round the front.

#### Respiratory exercises.

To stand up and without any previous physical exertion take long breaths, — as often recommended, especially in German books — is unnatural and absurd, in fact, may positively cause derangement in the relative pressure of the vessels of the body, and produce giddiness. Naturally also when you are going to do respiratory exercises, a need for more air should be felt, for which reason, these same exercises are in their proper place only after a corresponding exertion of the body. I have therefore introduced into "My System," wherever fit, an exercise consisting of one or more deep respirations (see time tables). While drawing as deep a breath as possible, through the nose, rise on the toes and lean the head a little back. As you exhale, — also as deeply and powerfully as possible, and avoiding all jerks — lower the heels and chin. While inhaling, rest the hands on the hips, holding



Fig. 5

the elbows well out from the sides (see Fig. 5), so that you can expand the chest sideways; this will best enable you to fill the lungs. Although perhaps this statement is not in accordance with prevalent opinion, it can be proved by testing with a spirometer or a tape-measure. You can fill the lungs better by also raising the shoulders slightly, — which is practical, if not aesthetically beautiful; and remember that raising and lowering the shoulders is in itself a good muscular exercise. After Nos. 2, 4, and all the rubbing exercises, you may, while inhaling, raise the arms in an outstretched position, to a level with the shoulders,

you. With a little practice you can manage so that the water runs down the body, with hardly any being split.



Fig. 6

But be careful not to make water-jets of your elbows. If it be absolutely necessary that not a drop should be split, you should sit down straight away, before beginning to wet yourself. But even if you are standing up,



Fig. 7

you need not spill more water than if you were sprinkling the floor for sweeping, — and that is a good thing to do.

Then lie down on your back in the tub, which will cause the water to rise, so that by rolling a little over on the sides you can

FIG. 176 Pages from Müller's My System.

During the nineteenth century gymnastics had been gradually introduced in schools curricula. The cult of physical fitness, free body movement and fresh air had acquired a growing social importance. During the trip to Italy and Vienna Jeanneret practiced the Müller exercises and washing ritual on a daily basis, an activity which he did not give up in Paris. Müller expressed the contemporary concerns with hygiene and the associations between athletic body, physical health, contact with nature, and intellect. Jeanneret referred to it as the "culte à l'Hygiène suivant le rite de Müller."<sup>162</sup> On one level, Müller's ideal was the Greek athlete, underlying which was also the ideal of the Greek intellect.<sup>163</sup> On another level, his book illustrates the link between physical fitness and art. Fusing the cult of the body, intellect, cleansing, and ritual, the bodily expressions of his illustrations strongly resonate with the art of dance, providing evidence of the common roots of gymnastics and modern dance (fig. 176). In this sense, it expresses the double role of the body, being both an object of representation through gestural expression and motion, and the means to access the inner self.

These examples show the extent to which Romantic ideas had spread in the early twentieth century and how Jeanneret absorbed them during his early education. At

<sup>162</sup> The first French translation is Jørgen Peter Müller, *Mon Système: 15 minutes de travail par jour pour la santé*, trans. Emmanuel Philipot (Copenhagen: Tillge's boghandel, 1905). On Jeanneret and Müller see Jeanneret to parents, 1 and 17 November 1907; 5 December 1907; 31 January 1908, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:68, 76, 88, 139. For the English translation see Müller, *My System: 15 minutes' work a day for health's sake*, trans. Fox-Davies and Grace (Copenhagen: Tillge's boghandel and New York: G.E. Stechert & co., 1905).

<sup>163</sup> The book starts by explaining the author's choice for having illustrated the cover with an image of the statue of Apoxyomenos: "Much has been written about this statue, but all concur in praising its beauty, and in admiring the Greeks, who, by means of their athletic sports and physical training, were able to produce human forms fit to serve as models for such sculpture. I have expressly chosen Apoxyomenos ... to decorate the cover of my book because he is the embodiment of the contents of it: he is the Athlete cleansing and caring for his skin after exercise, and is thus the Ideal towards which my book points." Müller, *My System*, 6.

the theoretical level, Vienna marked an important moment with the reading of Schuré, who had built his view upon the Symbolist discourse, on the one hand, and Nietzsche and Wagner on the other. Through *Sanctuaires*, Jeanneret became acquainted with themes such as that of life entirety, the renewal of religion by fusing science and mysticism, the meaning of ancient symbols and rites, or the evolutionary theory of art history. It was during the reading of *Sanctuaires* that he developed a passion for Wagner's operas, seeing them as a complete art–music, staging, light and so forth.

Paris strengthened these notions in several ways. In Viollet-le-Duc he read about the synergy of the several arts in theatre, with the author implicitly evoking the collective manifestation of a *total work of art* in his description of the emotive reaction to the music, light and space of the Gothic cathedral of Notre Dame and the resulting feeling of spiritual transport. Also, Rolland's writings and course at the Sorbonne introduced Jeanneret to the Wagnerian discourse on rhythm, to the abstract nature of music, and to its connections with the notion of abstract art as a means to experience the Sublime and the sense of spiritual transport. One of the main consequences of Wagner's parallel between music and the visual arts through rhythm—a parallel ultimately going back to Schopenhauer—is that it established the premises for Wagner's later turn to theatricality, its fusion with music and, through ritual, with life.<sup>164</sup> Rolland's approach to music reveals his adherence to the Wagnerian cult.<sup>165</sup> In addition, Rolland was one of the major protagonists of the French people's theatre movement which, through its engagement in the renewal of dramatic art, its democratization and educational role, probed into Diderot's theories on corporeal communication and the contemporary attempts to reconcile music, dance and pantomime.<sup>166</sup>

The contact with a broader Parisian cultural context must be also considered. Jeanneret met Appia (more on him in the following pages), and he may have become aware of Schuré's intent to reconstruct ancient rituals (e.g., those of *Les Grands Initiés* and the Sacred Drama of Eleusis reworked in *Sanctuaires*) and to perform them on stage, pursuing the Wagnerian ideal of creating a new religion by revitalizing mythol-

**164** Maintaining that the expression of a universal soul could only be achieved through the Dionysian nature of music, Nietzsche rejected Wagner's turn to theatricality in Bayreuth and move towards "a certain Catholicism of sentiment, and a delight in some ancient indigenous (so-called 'national') existence" observable in "Wagner's appropriation of old legends and songs in which learned prejudice had taught us to see something Germanic *par excellence*." See Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," in *The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alexander Tille, trans. Thomas Common, vol. 3 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), 68-74. In addition see Martin Puchner, "The Theater in Modernist Thought," *New Literary History*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Summer, 2002): 521-532.

**165** In an essay on Berlioz, for instance, Rolland writes on "Wagnerian forms," on the "liberty of musical declamation ... free speech in free music ... the triumph of natural music with the free movement of speech and the plastic rhythm of the ancient dance," and on a "tendency to go back to its beginnings, to the time when the laws of rhythm did not yet trouble her." Rolland, "Berlioz," in *Romain Rolland's Essays on Music*, 5th ed. (New York, Allen Towne and Heath, 1948), 313-14.

**166** For Rolland's engagement with the French People's theatre see David James Fischer, "Romain Rolland and the French People's Theatre," *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 21, no. 1, *Theatre and Social Action* (Mar. 1977): 75-90.

ogy through drama. A significant example of the Parisian context is Isadora Duncan. Jeanneret attended at least to one of her Parisian shows, hence was acquainted with her new dance form and search for a universal language, which opposed a wide range of bodily actions based on the expression of movement to the ethereal ballerina and narrative tradition of classical ballet.<sup>167</sup> From the early century onwards, Nietzsche, Wagner and their Hellenizing leanings had exerted a decisive influence on Duncan. Wearing costumes inspired by the ancient Greek peplos, she searched for inspiration in the poses of Greek statues, reproducing them in interposed moments of stillness, using minimal stage sets, lighting and props.<sup>168</sup> Jeanneret certainly understood that, in her deconstruction of traditional classical dance, representation had become embodiment: dance was no longer representation, but a numinous experience closer to ritual than to theatre.<sup>169</sup>

Then there is the discourse on Symbolist painting, gradually discovered between Paris and Germany, strongly influenced by the notion of rhythm. Echoes of the Schopenhauerian theory on the abstract nature of music and its comparison with the visual arts had reached Jeanneret at an early phase through books such as Blanc's *Grammaire* or Souriau's *La Beauté rationnelle*, the latter reinforcing the importance of rhythm in the aesthetic experience.<sup>170</sup> Jeanneret further developed the association between rhythm and body motion through his gradual contact with Symbolism. The Symbolist movement had incorporated these concerns in their work and theories, both directly from the German philosophical tradition and through the cult of Wagnerism.<sup>171</sup> In

**167** Jeanneret to parents, 14 June 1909, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:274. Literature on Duncan is abundant. For a synthetic discussion see Ann Daly, "Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory," *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 26, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 24-31. Daly has noted that Duncan forged her new dance form out of three American movement traditions: that of social dance as a model of social, sexual, and moral behavior and a means of promoting healthy exercise; that of physical culture understood as a means to improve the inner being, express character and personality by educating the outward behavior; that of classic ballet, upon which she constructed her negative argument. Daly, "Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory," 25.

**168** During her early tours through Europe Duncan had become interested in German philosophy, embracing Nietzsche's project of revaluing Christian values. In 1903 she wrote her first essay, "The Dance of the Future," borrowing from Wagner's "The Artwork of the Future" (1849) and Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch*. While these led her to the evolutionary promise of a life progress towards higher levels of development, Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* came to play a major influence in her theories on dance. She searched for the kind of aesthetic and religious experience of Nietzsche's analysis of the dancing tragic chorus of Attic, the proto-drama and the origin of tragedies from ancient Greece. For the influence of Nietzsche in Duncan see Kimerer L. LaMothe, "'A God Dances Through Me': Isadora Duncan on Friedrich Nietzsche's Revaluation of Values," *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 85, no. 2 (April 2005): 241-266.

**169** The idea of primitive dance as embodiment and sacred ontology is present in some of Jeanneret's readings, such as Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 23-27, being reflected in the episode of a wedding celebration in the chapter "Danube" of *Voyage d'Orient*, where Jeanneret writes about the chorus of women, dances and music symbolism as hymns expressing the emotion of the people, deifying the Danube and the plain. See Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 40-42. Also worth comparing are Jeanneret and Schuré's comments on the chants of the *muezzins* and Muslim music. See Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 22-23, 32-33; Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 72.

**170** Souriau, *La Beauté rationnelle*, 462-63.

**171** For a synthetic approach to Denis and the French inheritance of the German philosophic tradition see Gerard Vaughan, "Maurice Denis and the Sense of Music," *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1984): 38-48. Passanti has suggested the possibility that Jeanneret may have become familiar with Mallarmé through Perret in Paris during 1908-09. Passanti,



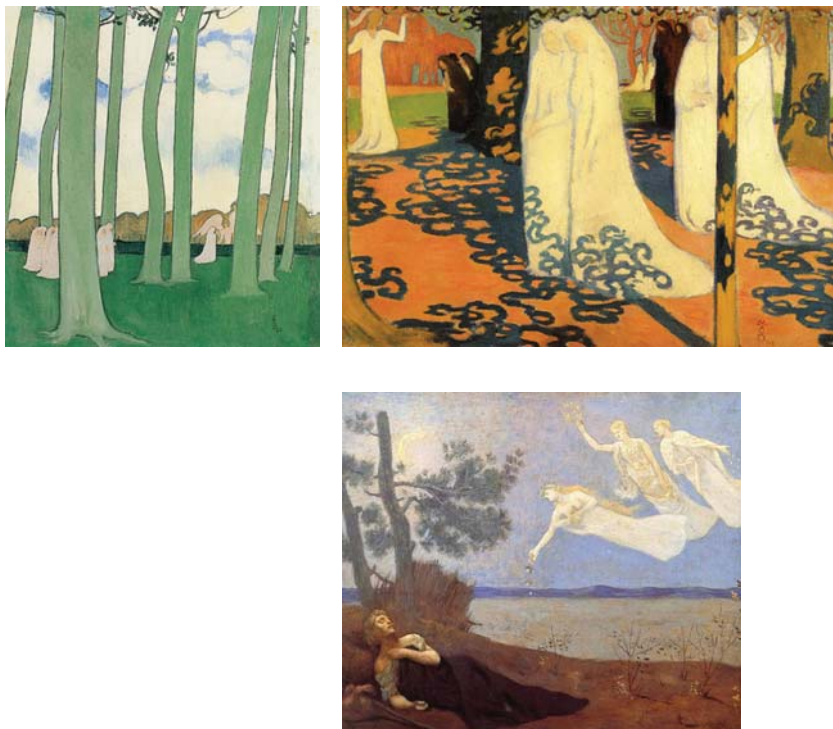


FIG. 177 Maurice Denis. *Paysage aux arbres verts ou Les Hetres de Kerduel*, 1893.

FIG. 178 Maurice Denis. *Procession pascale sous les arbres*, 1892.

FIG. 179 Puvis de Chavannes. *Le rêve*, 1883.

Symbolist painting, the analogy with music was translated into rhythm of lines and colors capable of stirring emotion rather than representing it. In other words, Symbolism connected the plastic and non-plastic worlds through the categories of music.<sup>172</sup>

Denis, who was concerned with the Christian mysteries of resurrection and annunciation in his religious paintings, reworked the fusion of Christian and Greek metaphysics through the representation of processional rites of weightless figures in white tunics, associating rhythmic plastic composition with body action (fig. 177, 178). Although in Schopenhauerian terms these narratives remained in the realm of pure representation, it is worth noting the inherent association between the compositional rhythm, rhythmic body movement, and the symbolist dimension of corporeal expression, suggesting the idea of a lethargic state and even an experience of spiritual transport through the winged figure in the distance. Most probably borrowing from Diderot, Denis referred to poses of this kind as “essential gestures” (*gestes essentiels*).<sup>173</sup> In Puvis, as well, Jeanneret could find a similar metaphysical evocation merging Christian religion and Greek mythology, for example in *Le rêve* (fig. 179), where the painter

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“Architecture,” 291n90.

<sup>172</sup> Denis argued that, rather than represent “ancient emotions,” art should stir them by “realizing the absolute”—a supernatural beauty attained through the “intimate secret of nature and number” and “mathematical rapports between lines and colors.” These mathematical rapports were essentially expressed through rhythm, exploring the inherent musicality of color and form. Denis, “Notes sur la peinture religieuse” (1896), in *Théories*, 32-33.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.



portrays weightless soul-like figures with white vests (suggestive of a Greek peplum) hovering above an ideal Mediterranean Earth upon which a Greek hero lies.

All these examples illuminate Jeanneret's philosophical background at the moment of his arrival in Germany. Having started to read *Der Städtebau* in La Chaux-de-Fonds, when he departed to Munich, he found resonances of the discourse on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in Sitte. In the introduction of *Der Städtebau*, Sitte argues that the city should not be just a technical matter, but a question of art, thought of as the scenario for collective manifestations. And he characterizes the Athenian acropolis as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* "that has the sublimity and grandeur of a great tragedy or a mighty symphony," describing it through the experience of a spatiotemporal sequence. Informed by the widespread Wagnerian project, he looks at the Acropolis not only as an architectural model, but also as the scenario of an ideal life, of a mythical primitive existence upon which the foundations of a new society should rest.

This *theatrical* quality of the city, so to speak, thought of both as the stage for life and the expression of the civilization that created and inhabited it, emerges in Sitte associated with the pictorial *tableaux* experienced by the inhabitant. The link between life and representation is provided by ritual. Extolling St. Mark's square and its unfolding tableaux leading to the view over the sea, for instance, he writes:

"... in no theatre has there ever been seen anything more sense-beguiling than was able to arise here in reality. This is truly the sovereign seat of a great power, a power of intellect, of art, and of industry, which assembled the riches of the world on her ships, and from here exercised dominion over the seas, relishing her acquired treasures at this, the loveliest spot in the whole wide world."<sup>174</sup>

In short, underlying Sitte's claim for a modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* is the Romantic ideal of a pre-Enlightenment unity between life and art. Jeanneret's interest in theatre during the German period partakes of these Romantic ideals.<sup>175</sup> The opening section of "La Construction des villes," titled "Thèse," expresses Jeanneret's broad view of the city. Like Sitte, he argues that the city should be artistically conceived, constructing an ideal scenario for the new modern daily life. And just as Sitte aimed at establishing a set of universal rules for town planning, so Jeanneret's main objective is to unveil the "concrete laws" created by the instinct of "our ancestors," through which ancient cities had become "œuvres d'Art complètes."<sup>176</sup> Beyond the contemporary concerns with the

174 Sitte, *City Planning*, 196. One of Brinckmann's criticism of Sitte was precisely that he thought in theatrical terms. See Collins and Collins, *Camillo Sitte*, 96.

175 On Jeanneret's interest in theatre in Germany see Jeanneret, *Allemagne Carnets*, 3:1- [5bis]8; De Simone, *Viaggio in Germania*, 91-93, 106n10, 12; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 215, 232n26; Jeanneret to parents, 2 October 1910.

176 "... ayant établi les lois concrètes qui firent de ces villes des œuvres d'Art complètes, nous essayerons ds la II partie, de voir si l'instinct naturel de nos ancêtres les guida justement et si l'instinct qui nous possède nous, bâtisseurs du 19

need for an adequate environment fulfilling hygienic and functional requirements, Jeanneret envisioned a new egalitarian society, had faith in “the splendor of progress” and the “grandeur of the human soul,” and advocated a strengthening of collective institutions, free access to education and intellectual life. He thus shared the Romantic ideal of a human society renewed at the spiritual, physical and intellectual levels. “C’est que nous voulons la réalisation de l’idéal,” he writes, “et notre foi sera ceci : le Vrai le Juste et le Beau poussant l’humanité vers 1 nouvelle apogée, plus grande, plus magnifique que toutes celles connues. Car cette apothéose, sera celle de la collectivité...”<sup>177</sup> The role of the architect was to participate in the construction of this renewed society through a new urban conception capable of awakening a spiritual life. The models for both this new life and city were to be found in the past;<sup>178</sup> and like in these models, a major role was assigned to nature.<sup>179</sup>

Jeanneret understood this double archetypal value of the Acropolis—both archetype of art and life—reading it in the light of the Panathenaea procession:

“... aux préoccupations de la vie active on avait su associer la beauté des costumes, les mœurs, les danses, les maisons, les meubles, les fêtes etc. on avait su autrefois ajouter celle plus douce, plus durable des arts poétiques et plastiques ; tout naturellement, s’étaient épanouis les plus nobles fleurons ... au long des rampes de l’Acropole s’étaient déroulées les blanches Panathénées / les blanches Panathénées s’avançaient processionnellement...”<sup>180</sup>

Jeanneret was looking at the Acropolis as the archetype of the Romantic notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which he had been nurturing since the reading of *Sanctuaires*. Within this view, the Acropolis was raised to the icon of the ideal coalescence of art, life, and ritual. Epitomized by the Panathenaea procession, ritual became a main reference for a mental aesthetic experience of a complete work of art, meaning that art related to a broader existential experience associated with an original existence of man in the natural world.

siècle et du commencement du XX est toujours 1 instinct naturel et par conséquent facteur principal d’1 réalisation artistique.” Jeanneret, “Construction des villes,” 243.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 236-42.

<sup>178</sup> “Les sociétés d’autrefois qui formaient et agrandissaient les villes eurent plus que nous le souci de rendre l’existence des agglomérations plus agréables, et de remplacer la vie naturelle (des campagnes) par 1 vie artificielle (de la ville) belle par l’art, car l’homme de la ville devait substituer la beauté de la nature par la beauté trouvée ds l’art. C’était en somme équilibrer ... L’homme ne trouvant plus ds l’existence quotidienne l’équilibre à ses peines : la joie que procurait à son cœur, à son âme, à son intelligence le contact permanent des gdes nobles et belles choses a cherché à retrouver ds la satisfaction matérielle ce qu’il ne trouve ds la gde chose qui était la chose de tous. Ce qui était la chose de tous Pise, Egypte, Croisades, cathédrales, n’existe plus ...” Ibid., 244-45.

<sup>179</sup> “... l’avenir créera en dehors de notre vie quotidienne actuelle des sanctuaires de beauté mise à la glorification du bien. Les écoles seront agencées pour le développement du goût autant que pour celui des sciences ; et la Nature sera préservée de la profanation afin que toujours elle soit le temple du recueillement, ‘susciteur’ des forces viriles.” Ibid., 238.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 238-39.

Issues of art, life and representation, and their association with the Acropolis, permeated the German intellectual context around Jeanneret, as we have seen. Once in Berlin, a particular synthetic window upon them opened through his brother Albert, who had recently moved to Hellerau near Dresden to study rhythmic dance with the musician Jacques Dalcroze and the stage designer Adolphe Appia.

Hellerau was the best known German garden-city, conceived as a reaction to the crisis of the contemporary city and industrialized civilization. Its promoter, the industrialist Karl Schmidt, envisioned a new urban design artistically conceived as a “collectivist manifestation” and promoting a comprehensive collective reform of society; Schmidt aimed at a “Reform of life” through a healthy return to nature and the renewal of spiritual and cultural values. Dalcroze was invited to collaborate with the Hellerau project of bringing art into daily life, by transforming the city into the stage for a renewed collective manifestation. For that purpose Dalcroze reinterpreted traditional festivals and rites in outdoor events associated with the unfolding of the seasons, coordinating music and collective physical expression. Jeanneret’s brother Albert had moved to Hellerau in October 1910 to work with Dalcroze. Jeanneret visited Hellerau in October and December 1910 and in April and May 1911, becoming acquainted with the Hellerau experiments through these visits, and also establishing personal contacts with both Dalcroze and Appia.<sup>181</sup>

Dalcroze is typical of early-twentieth-century attempts to reconcile an idealistic worldview with a positivist one. Former Professor of Harmony at the Conservatoire of Geneva, he had developed a new method of training musical and hearing faculties through physical exercises. Originally focused on the movement of the hands in solfège, he expanded his study of the physical reactions produced by music to other parts of the body. When he moved to Hellerau, Dalcroze embraced the politics of educational reform, further extending his pedagogical method to the “reconstruction, preparation, and adaptation” of a new society. He believed that instinctive behavior reveals the intimate traits of human character—the temperament. Human character could therefore be improved by the education of motor habits. The key notion was, once more, rhythm. The natural rhythms of the body should be regulated by rhythmic training, stimulating definite rhythmic images in the brain capable of generating a free exchange between corporeal manifestation and thought (fig. 180, 181).<sup>182</sup>

On one level, this harmonizing of mind and body meant the correspondence between physical and mental capacities—the athlete becomes an intellectual and vice-

181 On Hellerau and Jeanneret see De Michelis, “Modernity and Reform,” 143-170.

182 For a comprehensive understanding of Dalcroze’s theories see his *Rhythm; Music and Education*, rev. ed. (London: The Dalcroze Society, 2000). First published 1921.

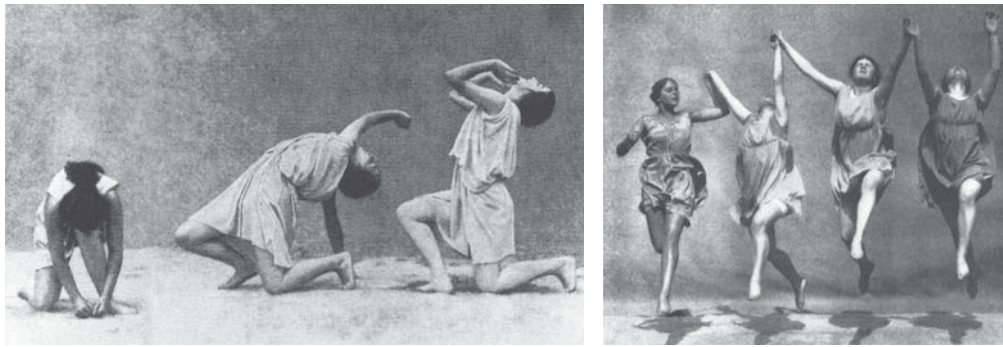


FIG. 180, 181 Jaques-Dalcroze. *Exercices de plastique animée*, 1916. By Fred. Boissonnas.

versa. On another level, art became a manifestation of the inner being, directly representing the rhythms of life; it could allegedly become life itself and the means of experiencing it. Dalcroze termed this symbolic gestural language, born out of the interpretation of musical emotions through the body, “*moving or living plastic.*” Through his pedagogical program, life would become the expression of individual temperament and collective character, for the correspondence between individual and collective identity was an attribute of the culturally renewed society. Within these blurred frontiers between life and art, dance was equally seen as embodiment. To achieve this new art form, capable of bringing together all men in a common emotional experience, each dancer should free her/himself from personal traces through abstraction, so that a collective will can be expressed by the crowd emerging as a single entity.<sup>183</sup>

Dalcroze thus gathers the several themes of the contemporary concern with the body, from the early focus on sensorial aesthetic experience by Diderot and Schopenhauer to Nietzsche and Wagner’s debate on the Greek chorus. Appia, a stage designer whom Jeanneret had already met in Paris and who had moved to Hellerau to work with Dalcroze, would be instrumental in providing Jeanneret with a link between Dalcroze and the archetypal experience of the Acropolis’s ascent. Appia admired Wagner but objected to the scenic design of his operas, the reform of which became a main theme of his work.<sup>184</sup> With the help of Schuré, Appia had published a book on theatre staging

**183** For Dalcroze’s notion of “the Crowd” see his “Rhythm and Gesture in Music Drama and Criticism” (1910-1916), in *Rhythm, Music and Education*, 124-131. Note how the association that Dalcroze establishes with the Swiss tradition of popular festivals with pagan origins, such as the festival of winegrowers, resonates with the Hellenizing imagery of the “Suisse-romande” movement: these festivals, he argues, reveal the Swiss “natural instinct for grouping crowds and making them live in dramatic action. In the open air, under the glare of the sun, in the prodigious framework provided by a glorious landscape and sky, in scenes where nature herself furnishes every gradation ...” (ibid., 125-26).

**184** Appia’s bibliography is abundant. The main work on his drawings and writings is Marie L. Bablet-Hanh ed., *Adolphe Appia, Œuvre complète* (Lausanne: L’Age d’homme, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1991). In addition see Richard C. Beacham et al., *Adolphe Appia ou le renouveau de l’esthétique théâtrale: dessins et esquisses de décors*, exh. cat. (Lausanne: Payot, 1992); Walther R. Volbach, “A Profile of Adolphe Appia,” *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol 15, no. 1 (Mar., 1963): 7-14. For the influence of Wagner’s work in Appia see also George R. Kernodle, “Wagner, Appia, and the Idea of Musical Design,” *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Oct., 1954): 223-230.

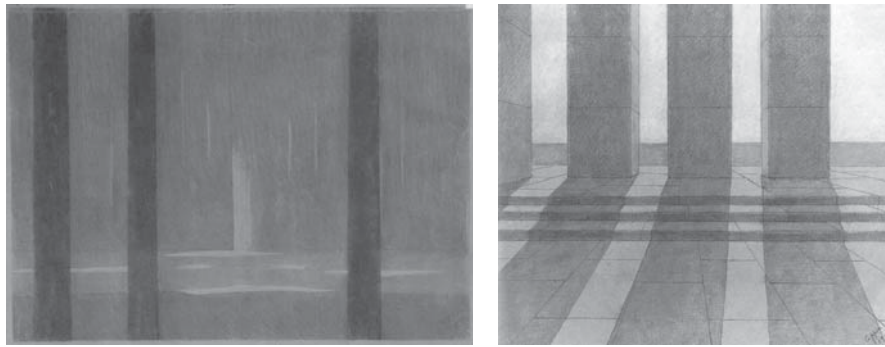


FIG. 182 Adolphe Appia. *Espace rythmique. La clairière matinale*, 1909 (unfinished).

FIG. 183 Adolphe Appia. *Espace rythmique. Les trois piliers*, 1909-1910.

in 1895, *La Mise en scène du drame wagnérien*.<sup>185</sup> Appia and Dalcroze, who had met in 1906, shared the same ideals. Dalcroze saw in his friend the ideal scenic reformer for the coordination of rhythm and space in a total work of art. In 1909 he invited him to join the Hellerau project. The work of each one developed under the influence of the other. Appia integrated Dalcroze's concerns with musical rhythm and body movement in his scenic design, while Dalcroze developed, through Appia, a new feeling for space and time by means of body movement.<sup>186</sup>

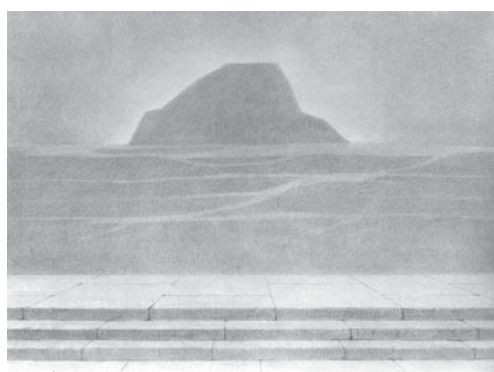
Appia's interest in rhythm was not new. His connections with Symbolist painting are particularly clear when comparing his work with the vertical rhythm of stylized trees set against a horizontal line of the landscape in Denis's *Landscape with green trees* (fig. 177, 182). Appia further developed these principles by shaping his rhythmic spaces through simple cubic forms, abstract in nature, evoking Classical architecture (fig. 183). Ramps, step-units and sets of platforms pervade his drawings, where one could easily imagine the silent movement of Denis's figures. They display the dialectics of prospect and expanse, repeatedly suggesting an ascending rhythmic progression leading to an eminent encounter with the landscape, either suggested by a void or represented by a horizontal silhouette at a far distance, which, evoking the sea or a plain, resonates with the mythic landscape of the South (fig. 184-187). In the 1912 staging of Christoph W. Gluck's *Orfeu* in Hellerau (fig. 188, 189), this encounter with the landscape was conveyed by setting his ramps and stairs against a neutral lit screen in the background, suggesting a void or abyss. Other studies envisioned a background opening to the real landscape at the rear, an idea that was integrated in the project for the theatre facilities at Hellerau.<sup>187</sup>

185 Martin Dreier, "Adolphe Appia aujourd'hui : Le point de vue d'un historien du théâtre," in *Renouveau de l'esthétique théâtrale*, 8.

186 This is expressed in Dalcroze's comments about the work of the dancers of the Duncan school. Although he praised their attempt to express "spontaneous and sincere emotion," he criticized two aspects of their reproduction of the attitudes of Greek statues. On the one hand they failed to "interpret the mentalities of contemporary human beings," and on the other their movements lacked order and sequence in space. See Dalcroze, "How to Revive Dancing," in *Rhythm; Music and Education*, 138, 145.

187 For the theatre facilities at Hellerau see Mary Elizabeth Tallon, "Appia's Theatre at Hellerau," *Theatre Journal*, vol.





**FIG. 184** Adolphe Appia. *Le Jeu des collines. Essai de géographie rythmique*, 1909-1910.  
**FIG. 185** Adolphe Appia. *Espace rythmique. Schiller, le plongeur, projet d'espace*, 1909-1910.  
**FIG. 186** Adolphe Appia. *Espace rythmique. Escalies en face*, 1909-1910.  
**FIG. 187** Adolphe Appia. *Espace rythmique. Les catarectes de l'aube*, 1909.

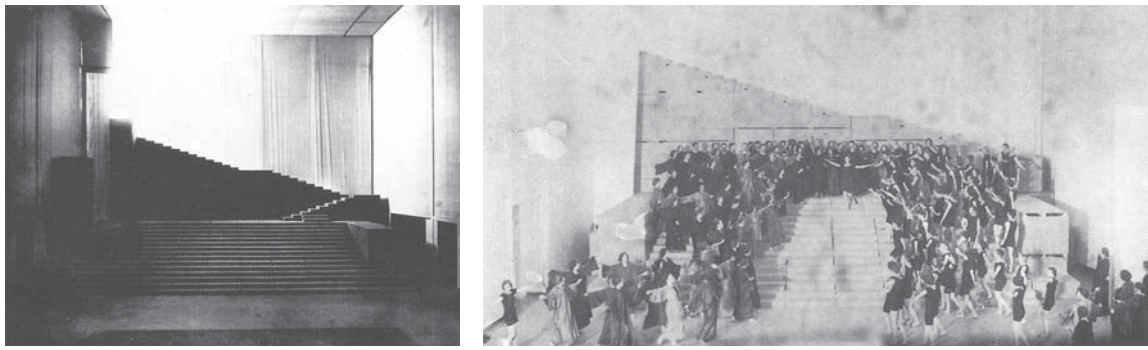


FIG. 188, 189 Adolphe Appia (stage design) and Jaques-Dalcroze. Hellerau. *Orfeu*, 1912.

The ramps and stairs in Appia's designs are related with the prolific collaboration with Dalcroze. Their role is to highlight the dancer's awareness of the body in space and time, thus enhancing corporal expression: "The study of the relations between stage gesture and space," Dalcroze writes, "demonstrates the need of dispensing with painted representations of artificial dimensions in favor of real inclines and staircases, which permit the body to vary its attitudes in pursuit of balance."<sup>188</sup> This is rooted in psychological and physiological theories that related spatial perception and the quality and intensification of sensation with muscular activity. In this respect, it is worth noting how Behrens endorsed Appia and Dalcroze's principles.<sup>189</sup> Just as Dalcroze saw the rhythm of body movement as a sequence of muscular contraction and release, so it is tempting to draw a parallel in Appia's spatial dichotomy between an ascending movement and a large, still landscape. One senses in this pattern of prospect and expanse a fundamental gestural narrative which, in defining a sequential opposition of movement and stillness, suggests the merging of two existential dimensions: matter and spirit.

Beyond the obvious connection with Wagner, it is worth noting that the effect of many of Appia's drawings is close to some of Boissonnas's photographs of Magdeleine

36, no. 4 (Dec., 1984), 496.

**188** Dalcroze, "Rhythm and Gesture," 129. In addition see Gubler, "Des pieds nus gravissant un escalier," in *Renouveau de l'esthétique théâtrale*, 93-108.

**189** Behrens illuminates the links between the German discourse on form and the work of Dalcroze and Appia. Deeply interested in theatre, Behrens published a small treatise in 1900 titled *Festivals of life and art: a consideration of the theatre as the highest cultural symbol* (*Fest des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols*). By 1910 his complete adherence to Wagner and Nietzsche's ideas was expressed in his essay "Über die Kunst auf der Bühne" published in March 1910. Jeanneret, who became extremely interested in theatre in Germany, certainly read Behrens' article. In it he could essentially find the main arguments of Appia and Dalcroze (the latter mentioned by Behrens): the synthesis of the arts, the move towards abstraction and simplicity of stage, props and light effects, the need for introducing ascending and descending movements through steps, ramps and terraces, the relationship actor/spectator and representation/life, the rhythmic ordering of forms and color, the emotional experience of spiritual transport and so forth. For an English translation, with an introduction by Stanford Anderson, see Behrens, "On Art for the Stage," *Perspecta*, vol. 26, *Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture* (1990): 135-142. In addition see Anderson, "Peter Behrens's Highest Kultursymbol, The Theater" (*ibid.*: 103-134).



FIG. 190 Adolphe Appia. *Avant l'arrivée de Wotan*. Design for R. Wagner's *Die Walkyrie*, 1892.

FIG. 191 Adolphe Appia. Design for R. Wagner's *Die Walkyrie*, 1892.

G.<sup>190</sup> All of them attempt to evoke the inner world. But in Appia, the stage directly connects it with the notions of architectural spatial rhythm and narrative. The ascending pattern of their narrative brings together several images: that of the mountain—shared by the French speaking Swiss movement and the broader Romantic interest in the Alps—that of the dramatic scenes of the Wagnerian demiurgic heroes, or that of their Classical references, namely the Acropolis experienced through the Panathenaea procession (fig. 184-187, 190, 191). Indeed, taking into account the geometric simplicity and the tension between ascent and latent encounter with the landscape in Appia's drawings, it is highly tantalizing to associate his stage designs with the rhythmic winding ascent of the Panathenaea, particularly when keeping in mind the image of the coordinated movement of a crowd.

Through Dalcroze, Appia, and the Hellerau experiments Jeanneret could sharpen the Romantic discourse about the reconciliation of spirit and matter and transpose it to that on town planning. The articulating node connecting these discourses was the Athenian Acropolis, which Jeanneret could now read as a spatiotemporal experience with a philosophical-existential meaning, structured by a meandering ascent and by a union with the world through an overall ordering axis at the top. This attitude would inform his 1911 Athenian visit and, above all, his concept of architectural promenade.

**190** The connection with the images of Magdeleine by Boissonas is significant because it illuminates the extent to which these ideas were shared within the intellectual circle of Boissonas, Appia and Dalcroze. Exploring the imaginary of ancient Greece and the linking of spirit and matter, Boissonas often photographs half length, centered, and with the sun enhancing the transparency of her vests. Magdeleine's body gains a majestic dimension and a mystic aura. The frames avoid a clarifying context, rather searching for a neutral background. Those taken in Greece show her against a dark mass of a Greek mountain, with a blurred ridge, and sometimes a misty atmosphere. Arms are often outstretched as if linking the Earth and sky. All combines, as Eidenbenz has pointed out, to bestow timeless, liberation from earthly contingencies, and proximity with nature upon this nymph of the antiquity. And this weightless figure brings to mind some of the paintings of Denis above mentioned (and Puvis de Chavannes's allegories, as Eidenbenz has suggested), evoking the notion of spiritual transport. Also noteworthy is a series titled *The Life of Virgin Mary*, about which Eidenbenz describes Magdeleine as "the embodiment of the natural woman and the compassionate mother." This reflects the contemporary search for a renewed religion fusing the Christian church and pagan creeds imageries. For a discussion of Boissonas's photographs see Eidenbenz, "Hypnosis at the Parthenon."



FIG. 192 Jeanneret. Bamberg. Abbey St. Michael, 1910.

FIG. 193 Jeanneret. View of the Jura, 1906-1910.

Just as the Parthenon had been raised to the icon of classicism, so the ascent of the Acropolis leading to the axial accordance with the landscape became, for him, the archetypal expression of an ideal existence, in which life, art and ritual coalesce through an aesthetic physical experience.

Echoes of this narrative can be found in Jeanneret's comment about moving to an attic in Neu-Babelsberg: "Et planté sur un rocher imaginaire je songe tous les horizons possibles."<sup>191</sup> And it is the essence of this narrative that he seems to have attempted to register when framing the stairs and leaning winged angel of the Abbey St. Michael in Bamberg (fig. 192). One senses in this photograph a *geste essential*, portraying an ascending path leading to a spiritual experience of union with the world. It is this same existential gestural narrative that, extending back to the Jura (fig. 193), Le Corbusier seems to have pursued in his dwellings through the concept of architectural promenade.

To briefly sum up the decisive influence of the German sojourn, Jeanneret's 1910-1911 readings for "La Construction des villes" encouraged his shift from the picturesque to the German discourse on aesthetics, providing him with the categories of space-form and volume-form apprehended through a spatiotemporal experience. Through men like Ritter, Cingria, Baud-Bovy or Boissonnas, he developed a broad view of architecture and landscape, which he interpreted through the archetypal case of the Athenian Acropolis. Dalcroze and Appia provided him with a synthetic window upon the ritual and philosophical-existential dimension of the Acropolis, expressing

191 Jeanneret to parents, 2 December 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:334.

the aspiration for a renewed existence in harmony with the natural world to be displayed by a spatiotemporal lived ritual. By the end of the German sojourn, Jeanneret had acquired the fundamentals of what we termed by Le Corbusier's ordering code, that is, a complementary relationship of geometry and landscape comprehensively experienced through a three-step narrative pattern: the approach to the architectural volume and its natural context, the spatial articulation of the inside, and the axial order extending the view towards the landscape. Like the monumental straight street of his manuscript on town planning, the feeling of spiritual transport and union with nature sparked by the ordering axis will only be effective when experienced in contrast with the meandering ascending path—the Absolute disclosed by the phenomenal.





## 5 THE JOURNEY TO THE EAST, 1911

The journey to the East was understood by Jeanneret as the final stage of his education.<sup>1</sup> This chapter examines how the trip acted as a mediating key between Jeanneret's earlier education and Le Corbusier's ordering code. The first question we must deal with is what led him to undertake this trip. Clearly influenced by German classicist trends and by his readings on town planning, Jeanneret started to think of a trip to Rome in September 1910, seemingly interested in gardens and the work of Bramante. The idea remained alive during the following months. Eventually, a proposition to travel to Istanbul came from Klipstein in February 1911.<sup>2</sup> But the decision to undertake a larger itinerary was not just due to happenstance. It certainly resulted from a set of ideas he had been nurturing since the reading of Schuré; for indeed, he saw Rome as the inheritor of a broader legacy of the south: "... je m'offre pour 1911 ou le printemps 1912 un séjour de durée indéfinie à Rome, la terre des deux civilisations sœurs."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it was upon this legacy that he expected to found a modern architecture expressing the regionalist values of the Jura. An annotation in Cingria's book reads: "...Pour moi, ce livre vient favorablement aider à mon orientation. Il provoque un examen, les déductions normales, claires, lumineuses; il desserre pour moi l'étouffement germanique. Dans une année, à Rome, je le relirai, et, par des esquisses, je fonderai ma discipline jurassique, neuchâteloise."<sup>4</sup>

1 Literature on the journey to the East is too vast to be listed here. For a comprehensive overall view see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 255- 303; Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*; Amirante et al., eds., *L'Invention d'un architecte*. Other literature will be mentioned along the chapter.

The primary sources range from the graphic data produced along the itinerary, to the collected postcards and writings. The loose sketches, drawings, watercolors, and photographs are available at the Fondation Le Corbusier archive and at the Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds. For Jeanneret's sketchbooks see *VdO Carnets*. The major writings of this period were published in Le Corbusier, *Le Voyage d'Orient* (Paris: Éditions Forces Vives, 1966). For the English edition see Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*. For an annotated edition in Italian, with a comprehensive sample of Jeanneret's photographs, see Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*. The main body of the book consists of the articles Jeanneret sent back home during the trip to be published in the periodical *Feuille d'Avis*, covering the itinerary until Istanbul. The observations and depictions of the first part of the itinerary are completed by some retrospective chapters on Istanbul and by the chapters "Recollections of Athos" (L'Athos), "The Parthenon" (Le Parthénon), and "In the west" (En Occident). The last chapter of the book was added in 1912 when Jeanneret first attempted to publish the articles as a book. The chapters on Mont Athos and the Parthenon were added in 1914, in Jeanneret's second unsuccessful attempt to publish them. See Dumont, "Inspireur caché," 60-61; Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même*, 19; Žaknić, introduction to Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*, ix-x. Some minor differences can be found between the several versions of the texts. I will only point those concerning the version of the chapter "Les Mosqués" incorporated in Le Corbusier's *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (Paris: Crès, 1926). The differences between the original manuscript and the 1966 edition of *Le Voyage d'Orient* are pointed out in Žaknić's English edition. Finally, equally important is Jeanneret's correspondence with his parents, with Ritter, and L'Eplattenier.

2 See Klipstein to Jeanneret, 12 February 1911, mentioned in Brooks, *Formative Years*, 246. Klipstein was interested in traveling to Bucharest to see some paintings of El Greco. See Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 March 1911.

3 Jeanneret to Perret, 27 November 1910, repr. in *Lettres à Perret*, 54.

4 Jeanneret's annotation is quoted in Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 85. The fact that he was thinking of being in

The final itinerary, then, reflects the contemporary historical and cultural reasoning which attributed the roots of western architecture to antiquity, and the belief that a new modern architecture would be accomplished by building upon those roots. That view was well alive in the contemporary debate on art history in Germany. Men like Alois Riegl (*Spättrömische Kunstindustrie*, 1901) believed that there was no gap between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Each epoch was the conclusion of the preceding one, simultaneously raising questions to be answered by the one to follow. Roman art was the end of a continuous evolutionary process from ancient Orient, Egypt and Greece, while early Christian monuments were the continuation of classicism. Through his friend Klipstein, Jeanneret became certainly aware of Riegl and the contemporary German debate on the origins of western art. As an art student in Germany, studying the relationship between Byzantine art and El Greco, Klipstein was well aware of this debate. In addition, he was a protégé of the art historian Wilhelm Worringer, who built his theories upon Riegl's. Jeanneret's initial plans to travel to Rome thus implied a broader notion of Classicism. Through readings such as Schuré or Corroyer, Egyptian, Muslim, or Byzantine architecture were deeply implicated in this evolutionary process. So, it is not surprising that Jeanneret thought of expanding the trip with visits to Istanbul, Athos, Athens and Pompeii, and even to the Egyptian pyramids and the mosque of Omar (these were eventually dropped).<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, men like Schuré and Cingria claimed that the study *in situ* of a broad transitional context of the history of western architecture, ranging from Greece, Rome, Syria, and Byzantium to the Renaissance,

•••

Rome one year after seems to relate to his intention to work with Tessenow in the intervening period.

<sup>5</sup> Mentioning his plans to travel to Rome, Jeanneret revealed his enthusiasm for Greece and Italy. Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 January 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 252, 259. Also his interest in Muslim art may be inferred by his reaction to an exhibition of Islamic art at the Munich fair, in July 1910. See Brooks, *Formative Years*, 226; Jeanneret, *Allemagne Carnets*, 2:181-83; Idem., *Study*, 168. On his desire to visit Cairo and the mosque of Omar see Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 18 July 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 279; Jeanneret to Ritter, Neubabelsberg, 1 March, 10 September 1911; Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*, 17.

Vogt has found evidences on Klipstein's diary of the journey to the East of his concerns with the influence of the Orient on western art. Based on this, Sibel Bozdoğan has recently suggested that Klipstein must have been aware of Josef Strzygowski's *Orient oder Rom* (1901), and that through him, Jeanneret must have become acquainted with the predicament that arose from the debate on the origins of western architecture. Given Klipstein's connections with Worringer, one might expect this to include the controversy between Riegl and Franz Wickhoff, on the one hand, and Josef Strzygowski on the other. Although sharing the view of an evolutionary process of art history, Strzygowski attacked the established Rome-centered historiography of Riegl and Wickhoff, claiming that the essential foundations of Late antique, early Christian and medieval European art should be sought not in Rome but in a broader context, from Alexandria, Egypt, Ephesus and Asia Minor, to Antioch and Syria, Jerusalem and Palestine. By the turn of the century—especially in *Orient oder Rom*—he had extensively written about the prominence of the Orient in western architecture, diminishing the importance of Rome. Beyond the displacement of the origins of Christian art towards the East, Strzygowski believed in the crucial role of Byzantine art in combining Hellenic and oriental forms and transmitting them to the western Christian art. Vogt, "Remarks on the 'Reversed' Grand Tour of Le Corbusier and Auguste Klipstein," trans. Radka Donnell, *Assemblage* no. 4 (October 1987), 43; Sibel Bozdoğan, "Entre orientalism et découverte de la modernité," in *L'invention d'un architecte*, 228-230. On Strzygowski I rely on Jas Elsner, "The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901," *Art History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (June 2002): 358-79. Talinn Grigor, "'Orient oder Rom?' Qajar 'Ayran' Architecture and Strzygowski's Art History," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 89, no. 3 (Sep., 2007):562-590.

was necessary to the foundation of a new modern architecture.<sup>6</sup>

Four major notions—already partially discussed—frame Jeanneret’s search for the roots of western architecture during the trip. First, he understood that the foundation of a new modern architecture should not rest upon a mimetic attitude, but upon the retrieving of the fundamentals of ancient architecture; hence his obsession to distil the complexity of reality into essentials, as we will see. Second, he looked at ancient art and architecture as a spontaneous cultural production resulting from and genuinely expressing the interaction of man with the world, framed by the specificities of the geographic context in each civilization.<sup>7</sup> This idea, widely accepted by Romanticism, implies the notion of a primitive peaceful existence and of an artistic embodiment of the divine in nature. Third, this interdependence between geography and art is expressed in a formal harmony between art and landscape. Based on the alleged affinities between the Mediterranean and the Suisse-romande landscapes, we have seen, Cingria advocated a new architectural expression of the Suisse-romande not just based in cubic masses but establishing a dialogue between the straight and curved lines of simple forms.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, Jeanneret looked at the abstract simple forms through Hegelian aesthetics, enriched by Schuré’s discourse on elementary geometry as a manifestation of the divine.

With regard to this last point, special mention should be made of Worringer and his *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*.<sup>9</sup> Taking Riegl’s concept of *Kunstwollen* (artistic voli-

6 Cingria holds that an extensive study of the architecture of all the transitional periods upon which western architecture is built is required in order to create a new style to be put at the disposal of “Suisse-romande.” Feeding upon Corroyer, Cingria argues that the Romanesque (le gothique primaire) which characterizes the architecture of the Suisse-romande partakes of this tradition connecting from Rome to the Renaissance, that it is a transitional style belonging to an evolutionary process, and that it is through this process that the continuity between Rome and the new Latin style must be accomplished. Because the goal is to find inspiration in a “Latin sentiment” and not in an epoch, the new Swiss Latin style must be searched for within a broad transitional context, ranging from Greece, Rome, Syria, and Byzantium to the Renaissance. Cingria, *Les Entretiens*, 304-30. Jeanneret would hardly fail to recognize either the evolutionist historical view of Schuré or the architectural development associated with it, built upon Corroyer’s *L’Architecture romane*. For both Jeanneret and Cingria, many of the cases adduced—such as the primitive pagan basilicas, Hagia Sophia, or San Vitale at Ravenna—were historically contextualized by Corroyer, whose book is among Cingria’s bibliographic references (ibid., 401).

7 “Et je suis obsédé d’une vision: des belles lignes droites, mais des rapports sveltes et classiques; infiniment de clarté dans les harmonies, du soleil intense et des couchants d’une pureté à vous faire crever d’extase, une plaine aride et nue, mais des Apennins bleus. Et puis des cyprès. Rome!” Jeanneret to parents, 2 December 1910, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:335.

8 In contrast with Corroyer, who sees in the Gothic the result of this evolutionist process, Cingria thinks that, from the viewpoint of the French Switzerland, the Gothic must be excluded because it interrupts the tradition of antiquity. This amend to Corroyer is significant, for in excluding the Gothic, Jeanneret could reconcile the accent on simple forms, by the French Symbolism and by the German discourse on form, with Provensal and Blanc’s accent on simple abstract forms, with Schuré’s discourse on ancient symbols, and with Corroyer and Viollet-le-Duc’s discussion on the Romanesque composition based on the assembling of simple forms. All these references that had been gestating in Jeanneret’s mind could now consistently integrate a comprehensive approach to Classical architecture and landscape.

9 *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* is the title of Worringer’s dissertation, completed in 1906. It was first published in the same year in a private edition and in 1908 in a trade edition. A third printing in 1910 shows

tion) as a starting point, Worringer argues that art echoes the psychic state in which mankind finds itself in relation to the cosmos and to the phenomena of the external world.<sup>10</sup> The *will to form* responds to specific psychic needs, resulting in two main aesthetic attitudes. One is the urge to empathy (*Einfühlung*), which characterizes the tradition of Classical antiquity and European Renaissance. It results from a relationship of confidence with the phenomena of the external world which allows for the sensible world to become aesthetically enjoyed, leading to an art longing for a recognizable simulacrum of reality and its three-dimensional space. The other is the will to abstraction of primitive art. It reflects man's anxious relation with the phenomena of the outer world and his inner unrest, which led him to search for tranquility in an art that suppresses the real and its spatial illusion in favor of an aesthetic experience based on abstract geometric motifs. The process of abstract art consists of wresting the object of the external world out of its natural context, purifying it of its dependence upon life and of its arbitrary aspects, to approach it from its absolute value.

The acceptance of an evolutionary principle, says Worringer, suggests that the urge to abstraction stands at the beginning of every art, and that it was the rationalist development of mankind that pressed back the primitive instinctive fear conditioned by the feeling of being lost in the universe, making room for the urge to empathy. Yet, in certain peoples at a high level of culture, the urge to abstraction remains a dominant tendency. This is the case of the civilized peoples of the East, such as the Egyptian, "whose more profound world-instinct opposed development in a rationalistic direc-

...

the extent to which Worringer's ideas echoed in the German artistic debate. For an English translation see Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock, with an introduction by Hilton Kramer (Chicago: Elephant pbk, 1997). All subsequent citations refer to this edition. Brooks has noted that a direct quote appearing in Klipstein's journal indicates that he took a copy of Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* with him during the trip. Also, Vogt has discussed the primal role of Worringer in the way Klipstein experienced the trip. Brooks, *Formative Years*, 256; Vogt, "Reversed' Grand Tour." Jeanneret was therefore acquainted with Worringer through Klipstein. In the beginning of the trip Jeanneret referred to Klipstein's advice to read *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, proving that Worringer was an early theme of discussion between the two friends. A sketchbook annotation on Riegl's *Die Spätromische Kunst-Industrie* at the beginning of the pages devoted to Greece (*acheter p. école livre 90 Marks. Die Spätromische Kunst-Industrie. von Alois Riegl*) suggests that Jeanneret came across Worringer's book once more at their arrival in Greece—even if through a conversation with Klipstein—for the author frequently confronts his arguments with those of Riegl throughout the book. *VdO Carnets*, 1:43, 3:92.

**10** Worringer demands to be understood in the light of the *Einfühlung* theories of the late nineteenth century. Put simply, Schopenhauer rejected the Hegelian content of form, counterclaiming for the manifestation of "will," paving the way to the later use of the term *Einfühlung* by Robert Vischer to express the unconscious projection of emotions onto the objects of aesthetic contemplation. Wölfflin, we have seen, and the *Einfühlung* theorists in general, rejected Semper's *materialistic theory of the genesis of the work of art*, arguing that it had led to an exaggerated valuation of secondary factors—utilitarian purpose, raw material, and techniques. Based on this discourse, Riegl advanced the concept of *Kunstwollen*—a *will to form* entirely independent of the object and of the mode of creation. Like Wölfflin or Riegl, Worringer does not approach art history as a direct consequence of technical evolution, but as a history of *volition*, facing those secondary factors as inhibitors of the latent inner demand of form rather than assigning them a *positive creative role*. Quoting Wölfflin, he argues that art depends on technique yet technique cannot create a style. See Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 8-10, 137n5.



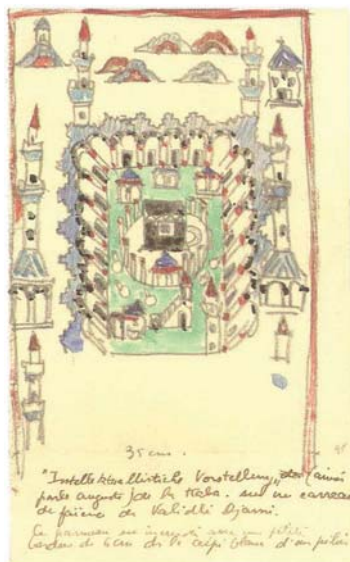


FIG. 194 Jeanneret. Detail of a ceramic tile in the Validé Camii representing the Kaaba in Mecca, 1911.

tion,” remaining “conscious of the unfathomable entanglement of all the phenomena of life.” Their instinct for the arbitrariness of the external world “did not stand, as with primitive peoples, *before* cognition, but *above* cognition.” Thus understood, the will to abstraction is seen as a means to a higher form of knowledge capable of fulfilling the existential needs of modern man:

“Only after the human spirit has passed, in thousands of years of its evolution, along the whole course of rationalistic cognition, does the feeling for the *thing in itself* re-awaken in it as the final resignation of knowledge. That which was previously instinct is now the ultimate product of cognition. Having slipped down from the pride of knowledge, man is now just as lost and helpless *vis-à-vis* the world-picture as primitive man ...”<sup>11</sup>

Vogt has found evidence of the influence of Worringer upon Jeanneret in a sketch reproducing a ceramic tile of the Validé Camii, in Istanbul (fig. 194). With the help of Klipstein, Jeanneret saw the lack of “scientific” perspective in the representation of Mecca’s Caaba surrounded with an arcaded yard and minarets as an “Intellectualistische Vorstellung” (an intellectualist concept), that is, a path towards abstraction through intellectual invention.<sup>12</sup> Incidentally, it is in Jeanneret’s photographs that the connection between abstract representation and architectural form is more clearly expressed. And this is made manifest early in Edirne.<sup>13</sup>

What interests us here is that Jeanneret could reconcile the Hegelian content of form that he had inherited from men like Provensal and Schuré with Worringer’s asser-

11 Ibid., 15-16, 18.

12 Vogt, “Reversed Grand Tour,” 48-50.

13 See Rabaça, “Documental Language and Abstraction in the Photographs of Le Corbusier,” *Jornal dos Arquitectos* no. 243 (December 2011): 102-109.

tions on the absolute value of abstract form and with his view of the *will*-to-*abstraction* as a phenomenon of extreme significance for the existentialist needs raised by the new condition of modern man. Moreover, he could recognize in this *higher* form of knowledge through abstraction the Romantic endeavour to overcome the Cartesian division between spirit and matter, as suggested in Schuré's assertions about the Egyptian pyramid. For Jeanneret, then, Worringer was important in fostering the significance of a broad primitive, Oriental influence in western architecture. But this significance now relates to the belief that a new artistic expression should recover the abstract quality of the simple primitive forms. Consolidating the reading of Schuré, Worringer allowed Jeanneret to look at simple abstract forms in aesthetic and existentialist terms, expressing and enacting the psychic disposition *vis-à-vis* the world.

In sum, Jeanneret had enough arguments to think about a wider trip, for the final itinerary resonated with the readings of Schuré, Corroyer, and Cingria, reflecting the contemporary debate on the Oriental origins of Christian art. And through Worringer, the specialized discourses on architecture such as that of Corroyer were overlaid by the broader debate on art as an aesthetic and existential experience. Framed by the Romantic ideals of a renewal of modern society, the journey to the East meant the search for the essence of ancient cultures in order to found a new modern architecture capable of expressing and fulfilling a renewed lived synthesis of spirit and matter. It is from this perspective that the journey to the East interests us.

For the sake of brevity I will not dwell on the whole itinerary, but only on the most significant episodes for our purposes. Following the itinerary, the chapter is divided into five main sections. The first one will contextualize the problem of the temporal experience of the landscape and the city when Jeanneret departed for the trip. The following sections concern the Balkans, Turkey, Greece, and Italy.

## FROM GERMANY TO PRAGUE: EXPERIENTIAL FRAME

On the 1st of April, after leaving Behrens's office, Jeanneret departed to Dresden and then Munich, where he seriously began research for the report on the applied arts. He stayed until the 19th, when he set off to Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Heidelberg, Darmstadt, arriving in Frankfurt on 23 April. From Frankfurt he visited Hanau, Offenbach and Wiesbaden, before spending ten days in the house of Klipstein in Laubach, during which they planned the upcoming trip. On 5 May he left to Mainz, taking a boat down the Rhine to Cologne. Then Düsseldorf, Hagen, Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck and Lüneburg, arriving in Berlin on 13 May. Jeanneret and Klipstein met in Dresden, whence

they departed on their trip. Before that they stopped in Prague and Vienna.

This initial itinerary interests us because it shows the extent to which Jeanneret was concerned with the temporal experience of the natural and the manmade, when he departed on the trip. I will focus on two short episodes. The first, his descent along the Rhine, concerns the broader experience of city and landscape from the standpoint of the traveler. The second, in Prague, concerns a monumental building and its relationship with a narrative ultimately leading to the landscape view.

Jeanneret's traveling experience was influenced by the traveling literature with its specific ways of seeing and describing the physical world.<sup>14</sup> These are closely dependent on the contemporary ways of traveling. The Baedeker guides of the beginning of the twentieth century—used by Jeanneret in his trips—illustrate this close interaction between landscape perception and means of conveyance, itineraries, speeds, and time involved. Proposing alternative itineraries between cities, they describe the geography and the cities along each of them, in a way far richer than those that traveling guides provide today. This kind of experience was intentionally pursued by Jeanneret during the journey. In the account of the itinerary along the Danube he starts by noting that he and Klipstein had given up on the Orient Express because it would not let them appreciate the natural beauties along the journey.<sup>15</sup> The same holds true in other occasions, such as in their planned arrival by boat to Istanbul. In short, Jeanneret aimed at a comprehensive understanding of the natural and the manmade, which demands specific means of conveyance and itineraries.

This tradition informed the contemporary traveling literature in general. Beyond Cingria, and also partially through Ritter, Jeanneret was equally acquainted with the literary tradition of the Grand Tour through such authors as Pierre Loti, Claude Farrère, or Ernest Renan. They enriched Jeanneret's romantic observation of architecture and landscape, and the pursuit of the exotic and classical world. The most influential of these was Ritter himself.<sup>16</sup>

We can see this interest in cities and landscape while Jeanneret was still traveling in Germany, in a letter to Ritter during the trip by boat from Mainz to Cologne in May 1911. The narrative, describing the unfolding views along the descent of the Rhine,

<sup>14</sup> On the relationship between traveling and space experience in Jeanneret see also von Moos, "Voyages en Zigzag," in *LC Before LC*, 23-43.

<sup>15</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 30.

<sup>16</sup> On the influence of Romantic and exotic literature in Jeanneret see Brooks, *Formative Years*, 256-57, 464, passim; Gresleri, "Itinera architettonica," in *Viaggio in Oriente*, 15-67; idem., "Les Leçons du Voyage d'Orient," in *Le Corbusier et la Méditerranée*, ed. Danièle Pauly (Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, Musées de Marseille, 1987), 39-40, passim. In addition, for the influence of Loti see Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 march 1911.

Jeanneret may have first become interested in Loti through *Sanctuaires d'Orient*, mentioned by Schuré in the section devoted to the mosque of Omar. Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 347. Also, Jeanneret had read Farrère's *L'Homme qui assassina* in 1909, a novel with extensive descriptions of Istanbul. See Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 March 1911.

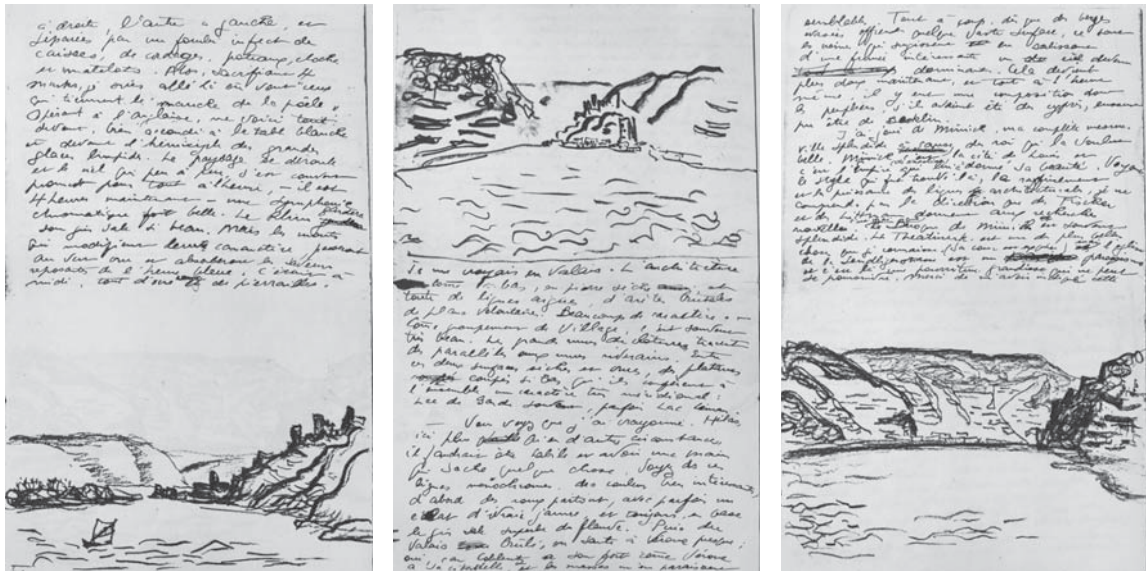


FIG. 195 Jeanneret. Letter to Ritter. Three of the ten pages with sketches illustrating the descent of the Rhine, May, 1911.

bears witness to his acute observations of the landscape and architectural masses:

“... au cours de cette très longue descente du fleuve, de Mayence à Cologne, le paysage se faisant moins banal ... Le paysage se déroule et le ciel qui peu à peu s'en couvre promet pour tout à l'heure ... une symphonie chromatique fort belle. Le Rhin gardera son gris sale si beau. Mais les monts qui modifient leur caractère, passeront au vert cru et absorberont les saveurs reposantes de l'heure bleue. C'était à midi, tout d'ocre et de pierrailles. Je me croyais en Valais. L'architecture comme là-bas, en pierre sèche, et toute de lignes aigües, d'arêtes brutales de plans volontaires. Beaucoup de caractère. – Comme groupement de village, c'est souvent très beau. Les grands murs de clôture tracent des parallèles aux murs riverains. Entre ces deux surfaces sèches et crues, des platanes coupés si bas qui ils confèrent à l'ensemble un caractère très méridional: Lac de Garde souvent, parfois Lac Léman. – Vous voyez que j'ai crayonné ... Voyez ds ces lignes monochromes des couleurs bien intéressantes, d'abord des roux partout, avec parfois un éclat d'ivoire jaune, et toujours, en base le gris sale superbe du fleuve. Puis du Valais brûlé, on saute à Vérone presque; oui, car Coblenz a son fort comme Vérone a sa citadelle, et les masses mèn paraissent semblables. Tout à coup, dès que des berges évasées offrent quelque vaste surface, ce sont des usines qui surgissent en salissant d'une fumée intéressante un ciel devenue dominant. Cela devient plus doux maintenant, et tout à l'heure même, il y eut une composition dont les peupliers, s'ils avaient été des cyprès, eussent pu être de Boeklin.”<sup>17</sup>

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This letter is particularly revealing in several aspects. While Jeanneret is looking at architecture through the category of volume and rhythm (*lignes aigües, arêtes brutales*), the painterly depiction of the landscape shows the influence of the Symbolist emphasis on the rhythm of color (*symphonie chromatique*). The cities seen from

17 Jeanneret to Ritter, 8 May 1911.





FIG. 196 Jeanneret. Prague. Street entering into Tyn Square, 1911.

FIG. 197 Jeanneret. Prague. Courtyard, 1911.

afar are also evaluated through their volumetric qualities (*les masses m'en paraissent semblables*), and Jeanneret's enthusiasm rises when finding resemblances with a "Latin landscape" (*le paysage se faisant moins banal ; très méridional*). Moreover, if the depiction echoes the traveling literary tradition, it surpasses it by being illustrated with a series of sequential drawings of the landscape along the descent (fig. 195). We are inevitably reminded of Töpffer's sequential illustrations, but in contrast with him, Jeanneret aims at the comprehension of the landscape and architecture as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

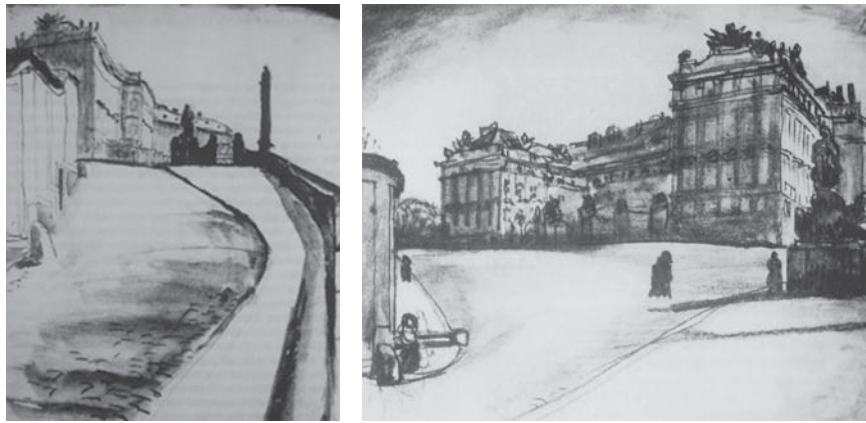
Let us now look at the temporal experience of the city. Looking at the drawings produced in Prague, one may notice the lingering of the Sittesque approach to urban design. Similar in nature to those he made in Germany to illustrate his manuscript, his sketches and photographs range from arches veiling the entrance of curved streets into squares to walls enclosing the streets' space, or to the enclosed spaces of courtyards and to the way in which the architectural layout and the strategic position of a tree—a Sittesque argument—define a diagonal passageway (fig. 196, 197).<sup>19</sup>

For our purpose, three drawings made next to the Royal Palace are of note. Two of them portray the west access to the palace along the Ke Hradu Street. One (fig. 198) was made at a strategic point from the sloping street, just before the curve from which the corner and the south façade of the palace are first revealed. While the composition enhances the ascent and the palace's privileged location by filling the foreground with the sloping street, the void to the right conveys the visual relationship of the hill with the landscape and the city at a lower level. The second drawing (fig. 199) shows the

<sup>18</sup> On Töpffer see chap. 1, n32.

<sup>19</sup> On the motif of the single tree see Sitte, *City Planning*, 308-321. See also the sketch of the courtyard in *VdO Carnets*, 1:37





**FIG. 198** Jeanneret. Prague. Ke Hradu Street. Approach to the front façade of the Royal Palace, 1911.

**FIG. 199** Jeanneret. Prague. South façade of the Royal Palace, 1911.

Royal Palace at an angle seen from the top of the street, precisely from the point where the west façade becomes totally visible. The oblique approach and the lower point of view remind us of the 1907 drawing of the Hôtel de Ville of Fribourg (fig. 67). The two drawings are conceived as a sequence of views as the road steepens ahead, carefully choosing the thresholds along the way in order to highlight the key moments of the narrative in relation to the palace.

The third drawing shows the approach from the east to the south façade of the palace along the Zámeché Stairs (fig. 200). Here too, the stairs fully occupy the foreground of the drawing, enclosed by a wall on the right side. The palace at the vanishing point recalls the Sittesque theme of an architectural form enclosing a street at one of its extremities. However, it suggests a postponed encounter with the landscape. This is first conveyed by the contrast between the left side and the wall on the right. One senses the presence of the landscape, progressively revealed beyond the foliage and the small façade on the left. Furthermore, while the oblique position of the palace's façade announces the end of the ascending route, it simultaneously conveys the direction of the panoramic view, pointing the direction the eyes must follow. Jeanneret further suggests this encounter by portraying the façade slightly out of center.

Either constructing a narrative through sequential views or conveying it in a single composition, these drawings concern a temporal experience where a monumental architecture seems to play a mediating role in the narrative, ultimately leading to a landscape view. Similar compositions can be found in other drawings of the journey, such as the watercolor of Grabovo, south Bulgaria (fig. 201).<sup>20</sup> Both the palace and the church seem to be thought of as a loose volume directed towards the view, nudging the movement of the promeneur in that direction. From this perspective, they bring

<sup>20</sup> The Grabovo watercolor was included in the series *Langage des Pierres*, a set of watercolors related with Jeanneret's traveling periods exposed in Neuchâtel in 1912 and in the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1913. Full details are given in Gresleri, ed., *Le Corbusier: Il linguaggio delle pietre*, exh. cat. (Venezia: Marsilio, 1988).



**FIG. 200** Jeanneret. Prague. Zámeché Stairs and south façade of the Royal Palace, 1911.

**FIG. 201** Jeanneret. Grabovo. Church, 1911.

to mind the early landscape representations of Pouillere. On one level, the early suggestion of sequential frames is now explicit in the sequence of the first two drawings. On another level, they transpose the experience of the landscape to that of the city, incorporating key notions of Jeanneret's studies on town planning. With regard to these, the most significant fact is that the space-form of the enclosed space now focuses on the latent articulation between an architectural volume and the landscape view. By integrating this articulation in the urban narrative, the aesthetic experience of the city gains a new dimension, reflecting the influence of Sitté's emphasis on the landscape seen from the Pompeian forum and, above all, Baud-Bovy and Schur's discourse on the experience of the Acropolis and the Attic landscape.

The letter from the Rhine and the watercolors from Prague show how the idea of a temporal experience involving the natural and the manmade—experienced from without and from within the city—frames Jeanneret's journey to the East, connecting his early landscape representations and the German lessons.

### THE BALKANS: EXPERIENCE AND TYPE

Following Ritter's advice, Jeanneret and Klipstein crossed the Balkans en route to Turkey: Hungary (Esztergom, Vác, Budapest, Baja, Mohacs), Serbia (Belgrade, Niš, Knjaževac, Negotin), Rumania (Giurgiu, Bucharest), and Bulgaria (Tŭrnovo, Gabrovo, Shipka, Kazanlŭk, Stara Zagora). It has been noted that Jeanneret saw the vernacular artifacts of the Balkans as a spontaneous artistic production of common people, resulting from and genuinely expressing their interaction with the world. Passanti has also remarked that Jeanneret's interest in typicality arose in the Balkans, associated with the notion of unity, and that the concept of "type" was understood as an embodiment



FIG. 202 Jeanneret. Bulgarian landscape, 1911.

of both culture and place.<sup>21</sup> What I would like to propose is that unity does not concern only “typological unity,” but also the formal unity of landscape and architecture; and that the concept of type concerns architectural form and spatial arrangement, but also a mythic existence in harmony with the world. In this sense, the concept of type emerges in Jeanneret closely associated with a fundamental experiential dimension not only of architecture but also of the landscape, understood in their inextricable connection. This allowed Jeanneret to interpret his traveling experience through the experiential pattern of the Jura landscape.

Jeanneret’s collecting of artifacts during the journey to the East—artifacts which, he felt, expressed a genuine and uncorrupted culture that he considered threatened by the European civilization—is framed by the view of an art expressing a pagan primitive existence. “L’art de sauvage est initial,” he wrote, “Le paysan est heureusement, *quand il crée*, un grand sauvage.”<sup>22</sup> In his comments on the traditional pottery and artisans, we find the notion of a bodily engaged lived experience. He describes the potters as men who, *not reasoning, produce by instinct* the most beautiful organic forms which are born from the correlation between the most utilitarian line and that which encloses the most expansive volume, a work which results from their fingers and not their minds or spirit. As to the artifacts, emphasis is put on volume and tactile perception, without ignoring color.<sup>23</sup>

The accent on the physicality of touch and sensuality of simple round forms; the comments on the tactile perception of the contour of a vase’s belly with the eyes half-closed; on a traditional art which caresses and embraces the entire land and stimulates sensuality awakening profound echoes in the body; the view of its lines as a synthesis of the natural spectacles; the symbolic value of color, intoxicating the eye—all this universe of images resonates with two interrelated discourses: that of French Symbolism, inherited through Ritter, Maillol, or Denis, and that of German aesthetic theo-

21 Passanti, “Vernacular,” 438-451; idem., “Architecture,” 86-87.

22 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 116. On the view of the Balkans as an uncorrupted culture see *ibid.*, 14-15, 17.

23 *Ibid.*, 13-17. See also Jeanneret to Perrin, quoted in Gubler, “Cari vasi,” *Casabella* no. 531-532 (1987): 120.



FIG. 203 Jeanneret. Bulgarian landscape, 1911.

ries which, extending back to Johann Gottfried Herder's debate on cognitive faculties, explained aesthetic enjoyment of sculpture through tactile perception rather than through rational cognition.<sup>24</sup>

This praise for vernacular artifacts and their sensuous forms lingered during the trip.<sup>25</sup> And it finds an echo in his landscape drawings. In contrast with the early works in Pouillerel, his Bulgarian sketches of wide undulating fields bring the horizon to the upper edge of the composition, demanding the viewer's engagement with the organic forms of the land (fig. 202, 203). The simple forms of the undulating terrain are highlighted by meandering roads or the signs of a respectful agriculture, revealing a change in Jeanneret's approach to the physical world. Having in mind Jeanneret's enthusiasm

<sup>24</sup> The roots of this bodily engaged appreciation of form are to be found in the Romantic discourse on sculpture that arose with Herder, his sense of the divine immanence and naturalistic monism, and his theories about tactile apprehension of sculpture. Herder first used the term *Einfühlung* in 1800, paving the way to its late-nineteenth-century use to describe the viewer's active perceptual engagement with an art work. Feeding upon Étienne Bonnot de Condillac and Diderot, Herder rejected the dominance of sight in the theories of sensorial perception. In his seminal work, *Plastik: Einige Wahrnehmungen über Form und Gestalt aus Pygmalions bildendem traume* (*Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion's Creative Dream*), published in 1770, he theorized sculpture mainly through the paradigm of Greek nudes, holding that such an art form cannot be totally perceived only by vision. Only through tactile experience can the beholder apprehend three-dimensional forms, mass, and volume, and have a unified experience of sculpture, be it through effective touch or by employing imaginative touch: walking around a sculpture provides the beholder with a set of sequential views, but only by employing imaginative touch will he be capable of assembling the various viewpoints and conceive of the totality as a body. This is obviously reflected in the theories of *Einfühlung* Jeanneret became acquainted with or in Denis's discussion of Maillol.

On Herder I mainly rely on Jason Gaiger, introduction to Herder, *Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion's Creative Dream*, ed. and trans. Jason Gaiger (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002); Rachel Zuckert, "Sculpture and Touch: Herder's Aesthetics of Sculpture," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 67, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 285-99. In addition see Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 178-186.

<sup>25</sup> Later on, during the journey, Jeanneret wrote to Ritter about an archaic terracotta he had bought in the Grand Bazaar, in Istanbul, representing a female figure with round forms which he found admirable: "Oh! J'ai déniché au bazar une terre cuite archaïque. Je l'ai payée cent sous. Elle est admirable. Je l'appelle ma Maillol. Elle n'est faite que de boudins et de boules ; elle est dans ses 18 centimètres environnement monumentale." Jeanneret to Ritter, 10 September 1911. Also Klipstein referred to the pottery of the Balkans in his travel diary in term of sensuous forms which, following Worringer, he relates to a non figurative art: "There is a special thing about peasant pottery. For it represents an applied art composed of tradition and a purely instinctive creation, which shows an autonomous form and an organism given sensuous expression by drawing. Here a means is available for combining the three-dimensionality of space, heightened and expressed by the linear pattern, together with the decorative effect of color without it having to be based on a literary motif." Klipstein, unpublished manuscript on the grand tour with Jeanneret, quoted in Vogt, "Reversed Grand Tour," 45.



for Maillol, one may say that they endow the landscape with an extreme sensuality, resonating with Denis's metaphorical association with Mother Earth. In short, Jeanneret had a pantheistic view of the landscape of the South, a landscape lived through an intuited experience and reflected in art form.

As for architecture, he equally saw it in the light of Denis's discourse on Maillol, that is, as taking form out of the landscape. An instructive case is his description of Baja. Jeanneret read the straight streets forming right angles as a solution in consonance with the plain upon which the city rests. Unexpectedly, the prejudice against the grid fades when confronted with a plain, putting in evidence the extent to which he saw architecture as an extension of nature. Like pottery, architecture is the product of a "primitive" existence, taking form out of an ideal landscape and partaking of its holistic dimension. And in incorporating an intuited response to landscape forms, it also seems to imply a similar process of aesthetic perception, that is, one that is not rational, but lived and intuited. Like in his writings on the pottery, those on the landscape and architecture suggest a similar dynamic aesthetic enjoyment—be it effective or imaginative—that fundamentally depends on the sense of bodily self.<sup>26</sup>

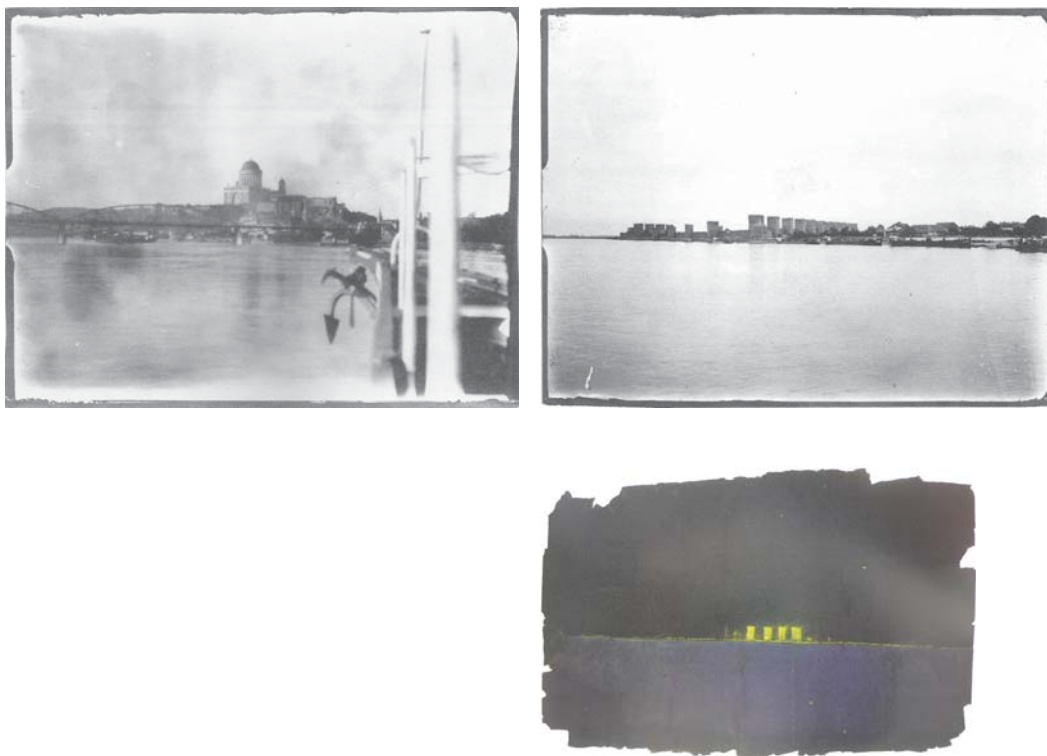
The numinous unity of natural and manmade simple forms is gradually revealed in Jeanneret's accounts of the Balkan trip. In the article on the Danube, the vast plains and the eternal movement of the river are seen as a proclamation of the immutability of all things. The day after traveling down the river he writes to his parents: "Ça devient merveilleux. Ce fut hier pendant douze heures grandiose. En bas le Danube. Wien nous avait engrisailés. – Immense chose, symbolique presque ce fleuve où tout s'ordonne en magnificence." The fortress of Pressburg (Bratislava) is described as a cubic form set upon a sphinx like a rock; in Eztergon, the cube and dome of the cathedral are described as an offering on the altar of the rising mountains (fig. 204); and in Negotin, twenty-six squared towers along the meandering river are depicted as a powerful composition emerging from it (fig. 205, 206). As for Budapest, which he disliked, he describes it as a leprous sore on the body of a goddess, surrounded by palpitating mountains condensed into a powerful body by the meandering Danube.<sup>27</sup>

To sum up, the association between art and the intuited theological embodiment of the divine in the landscape is not limited to small "primitive" artifacts like pots but extends to architecture, experienced from the standpoint of the traveler. More or less

26 Later on Le Corbusier wrote on the Parthenon: "Mes yeux, mes mains, mes doigts, pendant quatre semaines, parcoururent les fûts des colonnes, les chapiteaux, les architraves, l'entablement dispersés. Les doigts, les mains ? Y a-t-il meilleur outil de perception, de lecture, d'appréciation ?" Le Corbusier, "Unité," 39.

27 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 34-36, 43; Jeanneret to parents, 4 June 1911, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:365. Note that Jeanneret's mention to nature in terms of the "immutability of all things" resonates with Schuré's writings on the relationship between nature and primeval existence. See Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 49.





**FIG. 204** Jeanneret. Esztergom. Cathedral of Saint-Adalbert seen from the Danube, 1911.

**FIG. 205** Jeanneret. Fortress of Negotin seen from the Danube, 1911.

**FIG. 206** Le Corbusier. Skyscrapers. Study for Montevideu, 1929.

explicitly, this informed Le Corbusier's later urban plans. The most obvious case is perhaps the plan for Algiers, in which Tafuri has seen an attempt to recuperate a "pre-rational existence ... charged with eros."<sup>28</sup>

This comprehensive view of architecture and landscape took place in tandem with Jeanneret's praise for the dwelling typologies along the itinerary. Our interest is to understand how he conceptualized "type" and its unity with the landscape in experiential terms. This is particularly relevant in Tŭrnovo, where one senses Jeanneret's association between landscape experience (that of the traveler) and the dwelling experience.

Tŭrnovo is in south Bulgaria, the last country to be crossed before reaching Turkey. The approach to the city is described through the changing landscape, the Bulgarian green fields giving place to mountains suddenly rising up and deep cliffs: "tout  ta-it redevenu s v re." The city, developing along a ridge and its precipitous slopes facing south, acts as the hinge between two different landscapes, the plain to the north and the mountains to the south, beyond which is the "Orient": "C'est maintenant le dernier coup d' cil vers l'Europe, vers la grande plaine brune. Il faut se tourner r solument vers le Sud et ds quelques jours nous serons en Orient."<sup>29</sup> Read as a threshold between two

<sup>28</sup> Tafuri, "Machine et M moire," 210.

<sup>29</sup> See Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 52-57; *VdO Carnets*, 2:27[25]-35[33].

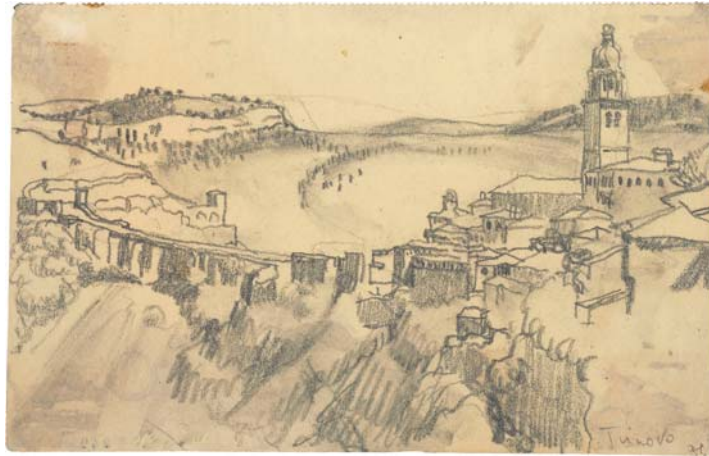


FIG. 207 Jeanneret. Turnovo, 1911.

distinct landscapes, continents, and cultures, the city partakes in the experience of the traveler. Sketches overlooking the landscape portray the comprehensive geographical reading (fig. 207).

This same attention to the landscape view is further explored in the description of the houses. The sketchbook reveals that Jeanneret was collecting information about the dwelling typologies, showing his attention to the large horizontal windows of the main room of the houses, their extremely small dimensions and whitewashed walls. In the articles for the *Feuille d'avis*, he highlights the relationship between the interior space and the landscape. Mentioning the existence of a main room in each house with a large horizontal window running along the entire wall—connecting the inner space with the garden's greenery—he writes on the visual relation with the landscape framed by the geometric grid of the mullions. Lastly, he describes the portico overlooking the cascade of houses developing along the slope. Both sources show Jeanneret's attention to the relationship between the dwelling typology and the landscape.

“Type” is thus equated with the experience of the encounter with the southern landscape, which also underlies the traveler's experience. Indeed, one senses in Jeanneret's comments about the dwellings the same dialectics between refuge and prospect that he explored in some of his early landscape representations of the Jura Mountains, associated with exploratory activity and mental projection, suggesting that the unity of “type” and landscape is evaluated in narrative terms. Just as the unity of “type” incorporates the dialogue between the simple forms of the landscape and of architecture, so it implicates the broader experience provided by both, ultimately read through the narrative pattern of the traveler's experiences of prospect, refuge, and mental projection.

## TURKEY: MOSQUES, CITY, AND LANDSCAPE

Jeanneret and Klipstein arrived in Turkey at the beginning of July, coming from Bulgaria. Their first stop was Edirne (Adrianopolis), then Muratli and Rodosto, today Tekirdağ, from where they travelled by boat to Istanbul. They staid almost fifty days in the Turkish capital and visited the city of Bursa before the departure to Mount Athos. The question this section takes up is how did Turkey contribute to the consolidation of the comprehensive experience of landscape and architectural “type” of the Balkans. On one level, the Turkish mosques deepened the association between the notion of type and its symbolic and experiential dimension, and that between aesthetic and spiritual experience. On another level, Istanbul provided the formal expression of this symbolic dimension at the urban and territorial scale. These two aspects are best discussed in two separate parts. “The Turkish Mosque” considers the aesthetic, experiential and symbolic dimensions involved in Jeanneret’s interpretation of the Ottoman classical mosques of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Istanbul and the early typologies visited in Edirne and Bursa. “Type, city, and landscape” addresses the larger implications of this interpretation in Jeanneret’s endeavor to synthesize the landscape, the city, and architecture, suggesting its relevance for Le Corbusier’s urban visions.

### THE TURKISH MOSQUE

A brief survey of the typological evolution of the Turkish mosque is necessary before trying to scrutinize how Jeanneret interpreted the most significant buildings he visited.

**BACKGROUND: TYPOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURKISH MOSQUE** The typology of the Ottoman mosque has its origins in a single domed space with a *mihrab* and an entrance on the opposite side, Anatolia’s simplest typology. For the sake of brevity, it may be argued that its typological development is marked by two main intents. One is architectural and involves technical problems. It consists in the attempt to create a large prayer hall, ultimately leading to a large single domed space. The other is ideological. It starts with the attempt of the Islamic central authority to absorb the pre-Islamic beliefs of nomadic Turkmen, leading to the incorporation of the main components of the *cemevi*—the *house of gathering* of the nomadic Turkmen of Anatolia—which consisted of a room with a central hole in the ceiling and a basin below it, defining a vertical axis—the *axis mundi* around which the liturgical ceremonies took place—and four walls

identifying the cardinal directions.<sup>30</sup>

In the early Seljuk-Ottoman period, the single domed mosque evolved into two main typologies. One is the multi-domed mosque, usually built in central districts to serve a large quantity of people (fig. 208-209). It results from the association of similar modules, domed and squared in plan, creating a large prayer hall, such as Bursa's Ulu Camii (1396-1399) or Edirne's Eski Camii (1404-1414). The second typology is the *zawiya* mosque, providing evidence of the Ottoman commitment to incorporate and gradually efface the non-Islamic references. It is a double-centered scheme which combines in a single structure two equal large domed spaces, reconciling the Islamic religious space with the pre-Islamic prototype. This is the case of the Orhan Bey mosque (1399) or the Green mosque (1419-1421), both in Bursa (fig. 210). The first dome next to the entrance incorporates the vertical axis of the *cemevi*—an oculus and a pool. But these are outside the prayer hall, the second dome, which maintains the essential features of the single domed mosque—a space directed towards the *Qiblah wall* and *mihrab*.<sup>31</sup> One of the consequences of this intent to separate the components of the pre-Islamic ritual from the prayer hall is that, in enlarging the inner space by adding a second dome to the single-domed mosque, this scheme led to the emphasis on the longitudinal path towards the *mihrab*. Whereas the space of the *mihrab* was exclusively devoted to prayer, the one with the basin became a multifunctional room, to which were attached additional *iwans* (elevated rooms similar to an alcove) derived from a former rural multifunctional religious typology—the *zawiya*.

A stepping stone in the formalization of the typology of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman mosques is Edirne's Üçşerefeli Camii, where much of the features of the classical mosques of Istanbul are already present. Built between 1438 and 1447, after Edirne became the capital of Turkey and just before the conquest of Constantinople, it had a pioneering role in the attempt to build a large prayer hall by

30 On the *cemevi* and its resonance in Mimar Sinan's Selimiye Mosque see Günkut Akin, "The 'Müezzin Mahfili' and Pool of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne," *Muqarnas*, vol. 12 (1995): 66-75. For the typological development of the Ottoman mosque I mainly rely on Suut Kemal Yetki, "The Evolution of Architectural Form in Turkish Mosques (1300-1700)," *Studia Islamica* no. 11 (1959): 73-91; David Gebhard, "The Problem of Space in the Ottoman Mosque," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 45, no.3 (September 1963): 271-275; Robert Ousterhout, "Ethnic Identity and Cultural Appropriation in Early Ottoman Architecture," *Muqarnas*, vol. 12 (1995): 48-62; Hans G. Egli, *Sinan: An Interpretation* (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari, 1997); Reha Günay, *Sinan: The Architect and His Works* (Istanbul: YEM, 2009), esp. 12-13, 184-201; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early Modern Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas*, vol.10 (1993): 169-180; Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971).

31 The *zawiya* mosque is an exclusive Ottoman type developed during the early consolidation of the Ottoman expansion which deviates from the standard of a wide, open prayer hall—like the Eski and the Ulu Camii. The reverse T shape plan is characteristic of the early mosques of Bursa, the two-storied plan resulting from the combination of elements of a *zawiya* or a *madrasa* with a mosque. According to Egli, this typology was soon abandoned. Yetkin, on the contrary, sees it as belonging to an initial phase of development towards the great mosques of Istanbul. In his opinion, this double-centered scheme was the first serious attempt to achieve a large central hall. Egli, *Sinan: An Interpretation*, 6-7; Yetkin, "Evolution of Architectural Form," 75-77; On the T shape plan see Ousterhout, "Ethnic Identity," 55.

means of a single central dome resting on an hexagonal structure (fig. 211). In order to further enlarge the inner space, the hall is expanded to the sides, giving place to a longer *Qiblah* wall, following the Islamic tradition of a rectangular praying hall where worshipers could line up parallel to the *Qiblah*. Two pairs of smaller domes are added on each side for that purpose. The technical challenge can be seen in the hexagonal structure supporting the dome, which led to the duplication of the structural arches and the corresponding triangular ceiling sections between the central space and the flanking domes.

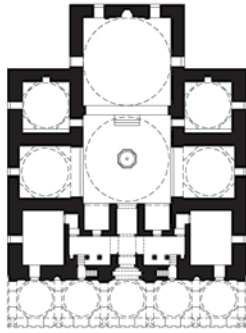
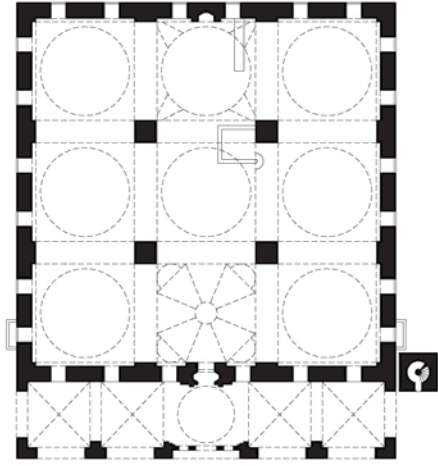
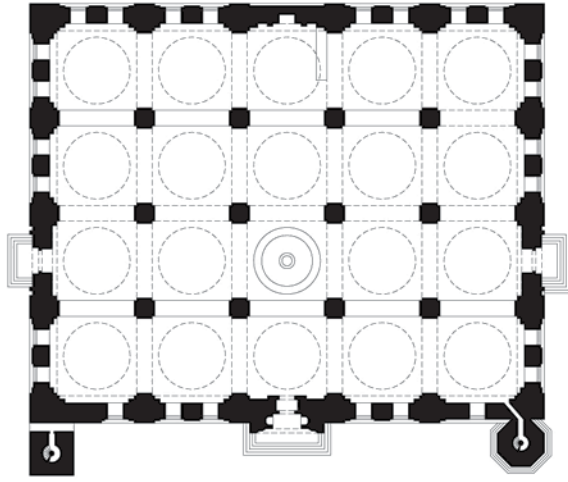
Innovative is also the open cloistered court formed by three domed galleries merging with the narthex gallery on the main façade, thus incorporating the court in the body of the mosque. In formal terms, the result is the assembling of two geometric volumes—the lower cubic volume of the court, juxtaposed to that of the main body of the mosque, where the central and side domes create a pyramidal silhouette. Four minarets complement the geometric play, read as vertical elements detached from the rest. In experiential terms, the domed galleries cut one off from the city, defining a secluded area preceding the mosque. Access to the courtyard is afforded by three portals. The scale and ornament privilege the one on axis with the *Qiblah* wall. The lateral ones are located in the domes adjacent to the mosque's narthex, acting as hinges between the volumes of the mosque and courtyard and emphasizing the tortuous character of the lateral accesses. The cloistered court seems to have been instrumental in removing the basin from the inner hall, replacing it by the *şadirvan*—the ablution fountain for Islamic cleansing rituals placed at the center of the court.<sup>32</sup>

This scheme constructs an elaborate path towards the *mihrab*. During the müezzin's daily summons, the faithful are led to the center of the courtyard, its seclusion reinforcing the symbolic meaning of the cleansing ritual as a preparatory spiritual clearing and dismissal of daily concerns. From this gathering point, the path follows towards the *mihrab*, next to which the initial phase of the Muslim praying ceremonies take place.

The cloistered court and its ritual function were incorporated in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Classical Ottoman mosques of Istanbul. Also, the sequence of spaces was further expanded by the introduction of the *avlu*—a walled garden surrounding the mosque. But the main changes in the classical stage concern the core of

<sup>32</sup> Although Akin has suggested that the basin of the *cemevi* might have been the inspiration for the inner basin of the *zawiya* double-domed mosque, he sees as inaccurate the assumption that the basin of the *zawiya* mosque is a precursor of the *şadirvan*. While the latter is linked with the Islamic cleansing rituals, it would not be logical to locate such a secondary function in the focal point of the building. The *şadirvan* must therefore be seen as part of a typological change which suppresses the non-Islamic elements and eliminates the second center from the interior space. Akin, "Müezzin Mahfili," 70.





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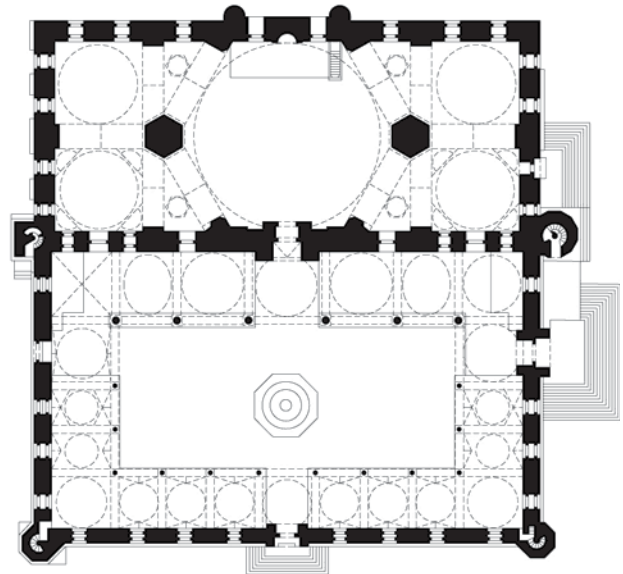
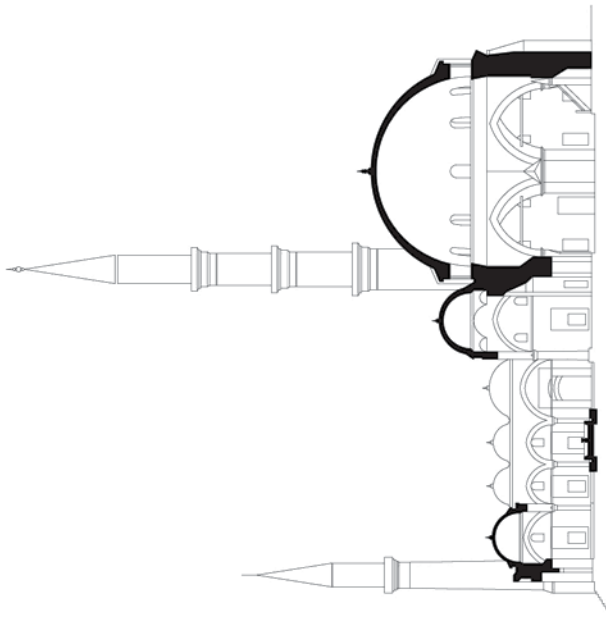
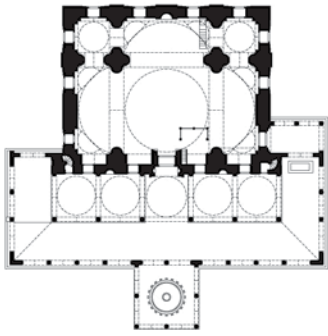
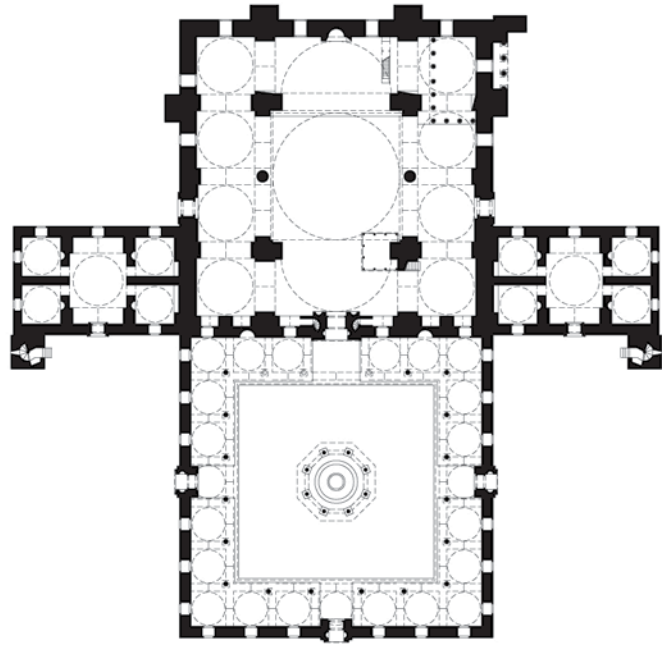
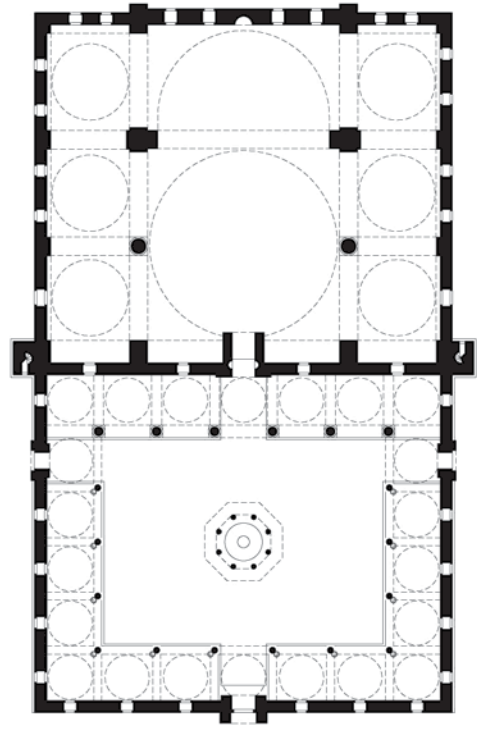


FIG. 208 Bursa. Ulu Camii. Plan, 1396-1399.  
FIG. 209 Edirne. Eski Camii. Plan, 1404-1414.  
FIG. 210 Bursa. Green mosque. Plan, 1419-1421.  
FIG. 211 Edirne. Üçşerefeli Camii. Plan, 1438-1447.

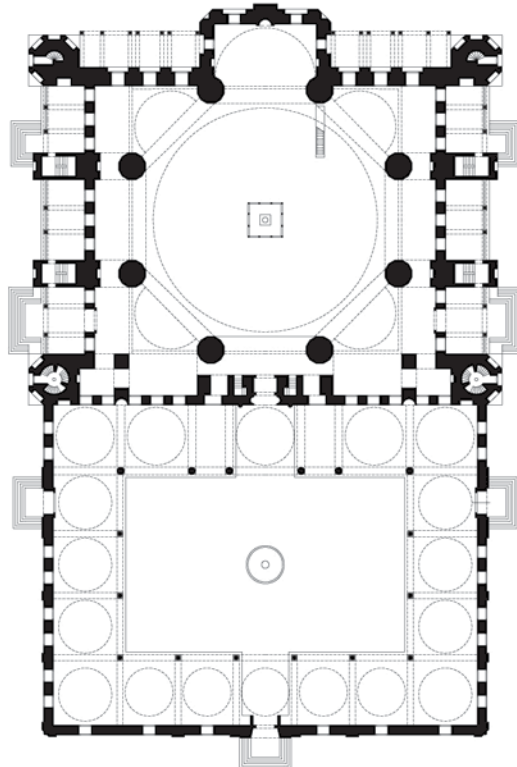
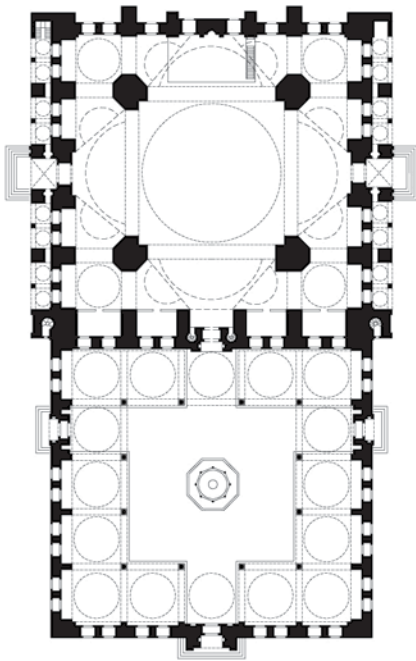
FIG. 212 Istanbul. Fatih Camii. Plan, 1453-1471. (reconstruction)  
FIG. 213 Istanbul. Bayezid Camii. Plan, 1501-1505.  
FIG. 214 Istanbul. Mihrimah Camii. Plan, 1540-1548.  
FIG. 215 Istanbul. Sehzade Camii. Plan, 1544-1549.  
FIG. 216 Edirne. Selimiye Camii. Plan, 1568-1575.



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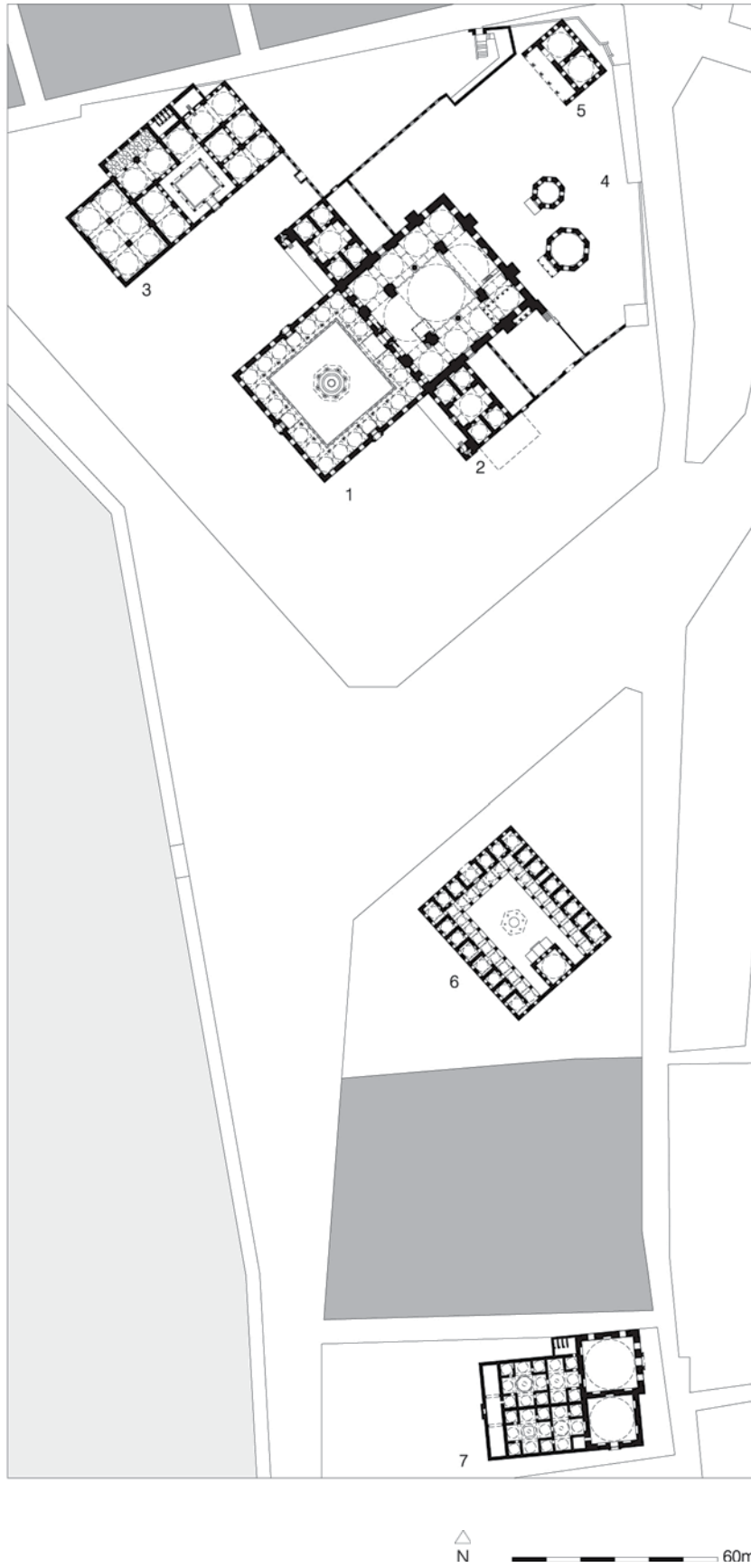
the mosque, the prayer hall. After the conquest of Constantinople, the evolution of the interior is strongly marked by Byzantine architecture, especially its major icon, the Hagia Sophia, and focused on a large single domed prayer hall.<sup>33</sup> The story of this typological evolution ultimately lies in the attempt to surpass the Hagia Sophia dome in diameter and height. Also, the perfecting of the Byzantine solution involves the attempt to evolve from the longitudinal nave of the Hagia Sophia towards a centralized plan.

In the old Fatih Camii (1453-1471), the space of the central dome is extended along the longitudinal axis by a semi-dome above the *mihrab*, and by one row of three smaller domes on each side (fig. 212). Due to the structural weakness of this solution, the mosque eventually collapsed in the 1776 earthquake. The Bayezid Camii (1501-1505) retakes the Byzantine model, a central space below the main dome, extended by two semi-domes along the entrance axis and two flanking naves with four smaller domes each (fig. 213). For the first time in Ottoman architecture, the dome is supported by piers rather than by the external walls. The mature outcomes of this typological and technical research are by Mimar Sinan. In the Mihrimah Camii, in Scutary (1540-1548), the flanking galleries are replaced by semi-domes, while the semi-dome in the side entrance is eliminated (fig. 214). In the Şehzade Camii (1544-1549), the central dome is expanded by four semi-domes creating a centralized space (fig. 215). Finally, the Selimiye Camii (1568-1575), where the Ottoman endeavors to build a dome as large as that of the Hagia Sophia was successfully accomplished (fig. 216). To achieve this technical feat, Sinan adopted an octagonal-based structure resonating with the hexagonal Üçşerefeli Camii, enabling him to reduce the bay of the arches. The result is a perfect centrally organized plan with the *müezzin mahfili* in its center and the protruding *mihrab* subtly highlighting the longitudinal axis.<sup>34</sup>

A last mention must be made of the Ottoman külliye, the complex composed of the mosque and utilitarian buildings beneficial to the entire community—ranging from the *madrasa* to the hospital, kitchens for the poor, public baths, *caravanserai*, primary school and even medical school. With the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the

<sup>33</sup> For a general assessment on the complex cultural intersections between Byzantine and early Ottomans see Ousterhout, "Ethnic Identity"; Speros Vryonis, Jr., "The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms," *Durbar Oaks Papers*, vol. 23-24 (1969/1970): 251-308; Metin Ahunbay and Zeynep Ahunbay, "Structural Influence of Hagia Sophia on Ottoman Mosque Architecture," in *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Robert Mark and Ahmet S. Çakmak (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 179-194; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early Modern Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas*, vol.10 (1993): 169-180. Ousterhout points out, for instance, how the frequent incorporation of Byzantine spolia in early Ottoman architecture, such as columns, attests to the Byzantine influence in construction techniques since the Seljuq period.

<sup>34</sup> For a synthetic account of this process see Günay, *Sinan*, 12, 56-63; Egli, *Sinan*; Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005). All these mosques, as well as the remaining mosques analyzed in the text, were visited by Jeanneret.



1 Mosque 2 Hospice 3 Quranic School 4 Cemetery 5 Elementary School 6 Madrasa 7 Bath house

FIG. 217 Istanbul. Bayezid complex. Plan.

Seljuk monumental *madrassa*, usually associated with a mosque, was absorbed by a broader complex of public buildings, the *külliye*. The first *külliye* were built towards the end of the fourteenth century in Bursa, the capital of the Empire at that time. The loose arrangement of the individual public buildings grouped around the mosque was usually determined by the terrain and urban fabric (fig. 217). After the conquest of Istanbul, these buildings were gradually submitted to the self-referential order of the mosques. This tradition was explored by Sinan, who conceived the complex as a whole by disposing the *külliye* around the *avlu* and subordinating the various structures to the orthogonal scheme of the mosque. Through its formal unity, the mosque and the *külliye* express the functional unity of a comprehensive program of social, religious, and educational facilities.<sup>35</sup>

With this short survey in mind, we may now attempt an interpretation of Jeanneret's response to the Turkish mosques. For Jeanneret, Istanbul was the first major stop of the journey. But it took him time to come to terms with the city and its architecture.<sup>36</sup> We will now review the most significant buildings visited by Jeanneret—what they are and how he interpreted them—starting with the Byzantine basilica of Hagia Sophia.

**THE HAGIA SOPHIA** After the conquest of Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque. Four minarets and an *avlu* were added in an attempt to adapt it to the standard layout of Ottoman imperial complexes.<sup>37</sup> From the street one has to cross the *avlu* to reach the main entrance on the northwest (fig. 218). The buttresses at the entry façade, which Jeanneret had drawn after Viollet-le-Duc, make the three main entrance doors between them recede.<sup>38</sup> The resulting depth of the access is followed by an elaborate sequence of spaces. A first narthex runs along the façade. Through relatively small doors one reaches a second narthex parallel to the former, higher and about twice as wide. The progression through both narthexes entails a growing scale and decoration, preparing the entrance into the basilica nave. Once inside, one finds

<sup>35</sup> For a synthetic approach to the *külliye* see Ulya Vögt-Göknill, "Spatial Order in Sinan's Külliyes," *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Center* no. 1-2 (1987): 168-173.

<sup>36</sup> Jeanneret to Ritter, 8 May 1911. His endeavor to comprehend the city and its architecture is particularly clear in a letter to L'Eplattenier: "Je ne vais pas parler de Constantinople car on n'en parle pas quand on ne sait pas qu'en dire comme moi. En tout cas, c'est autrement que ce qu'on imagine. Andrinople fut très bien et Rodasto aussi et [sic] ... C'est pas tout facile d'aimer Constantinople. Il faut bougrement travailler ... L'intérieur de Ste Sophie me porterait volontiers à blasphémer. Mais je ne risque pas l'enfer légèrement, j'attends ... et les mosquées en général d'une mauvaise architecture ... que l'architecture domestique n'existe pas chez eux ! C'était tout autre en Hongrie Bulgarie Roumanie." Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 18 July, 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 277-279.

<sup>37</sup> See Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia After Byzantium," in *Hagia Sophia*, 210.

<sup>38</sup> In the School of Arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds Jeanneret had made a drawing of the main entrance of the basilica (FLC B2-20 293/295) after an illustration of Viollet-le-Duc's *De la décoration appliquée aux edifices* (1880), 27.



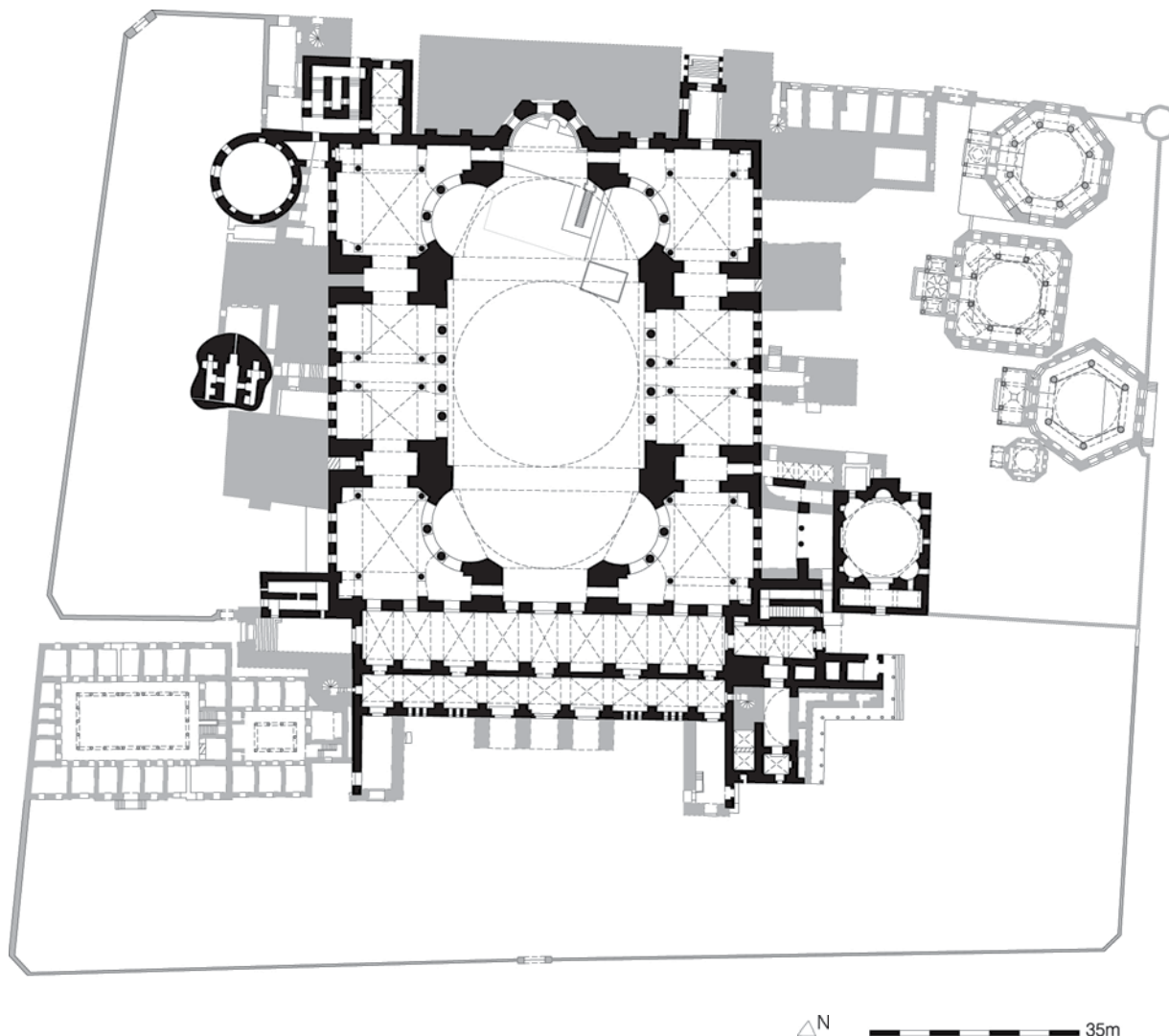


FIG. 218 Hagia Sophia. Plan. Byzantine construction in black; later additions in gray.

the large space below the central dome. Its impressive scale reveals equally impressive technical skills. As Viollet-le-Duc and Corroyer had explained, the dome is supported by four large piers and four arches. The transition between the arches and the circular dome is solved by pendentives. In order to extend the space along the longitudinal axis, two semi-domes are added, doubling the span in the longitudinal direction. The semi-domes receive the lateral loads of the dome, while on the sides these are distributed by the vaulted structure of the two floor level galleries developing outwards on the sides of the nave. The smaller intervening piers below the lateral arches, bracing the main piers, create a considerable closed threshold between the central and the flanking naves. The difference in scale emphasizes the intentional filtering role of this plane and the longitudinal development of space, which is then reinforced by further extending the space of each semi-dome with three smaller semi-domes, thus achieving a rectangular plan. The smaller semi-dome on the longitudinal axis, on the side of the altar, has a greater depth than the lateral ones. From the nave, then, the access



FIG. 219 Jeanneret. Hagia Sophia. Perspectives.

route is extended by the eye throughout this succession of receded spaces and surfaces. With the exception of the semi-dome of the altar, the interior is lit either from above or through the windows on the receded external walls, filtered by the structure and by the depth of the flanking galleries. As a consequence, the sensation of receding spatial limits is impressively amplified.

The ambiguity resulting from the sense of spatial development along both the vertical and horizontal axes is easily felt. On one level, the sheer size of the central area and the homogeneous light emphasize the central space, where one feels like floating. Time is momentarily arrested. On another level, the longitudinal development of the nave as one walks through is strongly conveyed by the progressive suspension of the limits of space and the receding of the filtered light sources, creating a kind of *mise en abîme* resulting in an endless sequential continuity along the main direction. The interaction of these factors conveys the uniqueness of the experience.

**VERTICAL VS. LONGITUDINAL** Jeanneret's particular attention to the Hagia Sophia is expectable. From Corroyer and Viollet-le-Duc, he was aware that it constituted a key moment of the evolutionary process of western architecture. These authors certainly helped him to decipher the technical solutions involved in the Byzantine basilica and its volumetric composition based on assembled simple forms. From Corroyer, he had sketched the plan and cross-section, writing about the technical solution found to achieve a rectangular plan; from Viollet-le-Duc, he was aware that the assembled volumes constituted the basis of its ornament.<sup>39</sup> His Turkish sketches, reconstructing the

<sup>39</sup> "La forme de la structure seule constitue le système décoratif. On peut certainement supposer que l'édifice n'a jamais reçu à l'extérieur l'ornementation qui lui était destinée ; mais il est bien certain que cette ornementation, si elle eût

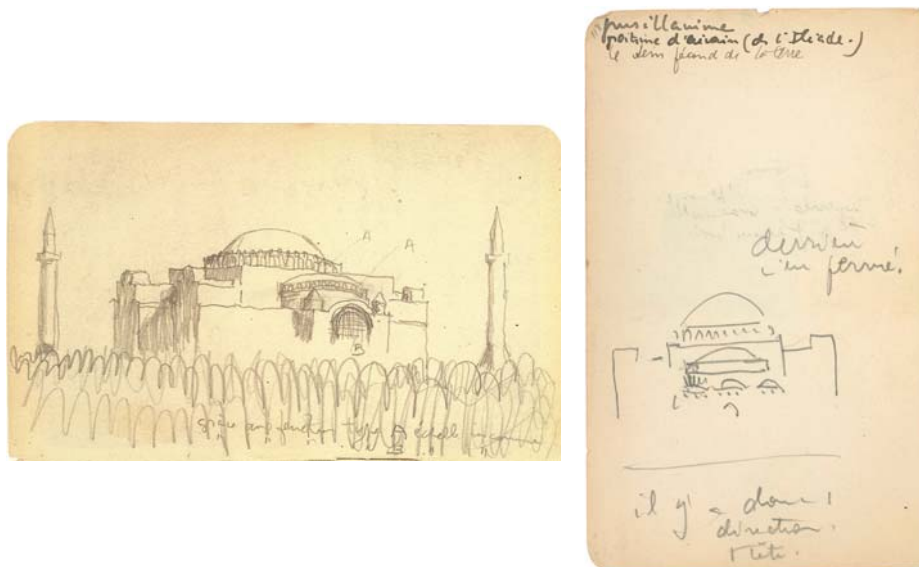


FIG. 220 Jeanneret. Hagia Sophia. Perspective.  
 FIG. 221 Jeanneret. Hagia Sophia. East elevation.

effect of the structural system on the original volumetric expression of the exterior, indicate his understanding of the overall composition (fig. 219, 220). The annotation on one of them clearly expresses the resulting aesthetic principles: “ce sont les cubes qui agissent et l’embrochement.” By contrast, and despite his efforts, he had a hard time dealing with the interior (*L’intérieur de Ste Sophie me porterait volontiers à blasphémer. Mais je ne risque pas l’enfer légèrement, j’attends*).<sup>40</sup>

Hagia Sophia is a very powerful piece of architecture, and Jeanneret could hardly remain indifferent to it, especially since its interior would have resonated with the Ruskinian notions of mystery, with the *absolute infinity of things*, and with the idea of exploratory movement associated with them. This starts with the elaborated access, the succession of surfaces delaying the limits of space, or the filtered light sources, expanding the space along the main axis. In addition, Viollet-le-Duc had equally established a correspondence between structure and inner form;<sup>41</sup> and at the time of Jeanneret’s visit, the structure was more clearly expressed in the interior than in the exterior, where the Ottoman volumes attached to the original building compromise the

...

été exécutée, n’aurait consisté qu’en revêtements de plaques de marbre, en mosaïques et enduits colorés, aucune saillie, aucune attente ne permettant d’admettre un autre mode. En un mot, ici, les architectes Anthémios de Tralles et Isidore de Milet n’ont prétendu trouver leurs motifs décoratifs que dans la coloration de la structure rigoureusement déduite du besoin.” Viollet-le-Duc, *De la décoration*, 26.

<sup>40</sup> Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 18 July, 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 277-279. To Ritter he wrote: “Ste Sophie est-elle belle ? – parlons ici de l’intérieur. Est que Constantinople n’est pas un mirage? ... Mais me voici sur ce sujet j’ai juré de n’en point faillir de long temps, avant que ça vienne, que ça se révèle ... Je vous ai dit que j’attendais l’heure de la révélation.” Jeanneret to Ritter, July 1911.

<sup>41</sup> “A l’intérieur, l’église de Sainte-Sophie a été terminée, comme ornementation ... La structure reste franchement apparente, l’ossature de l’édifice éminemment compréhensible ...” Viollet-le-Duc, *De la décoration*, 28. See also his *Entretiens*, 2:200. The correspondence between structure and inner form also emerges in the typological debate in *Dictionnaire* as well as in Corroyer’s book.



FIG. 222 Jeanneret. Hagia Sophia. East view, 1911.

FIG. 223 Jeanneret. Selimiye Camii, 1911.

perception of its assembled forms (fig. 218). So, why did he find the interior incomprehensible despite its obvious attractiveness to him? Because he was torn between two interpretations of Hagia Sophia that he had absorbed in Paris, one emphasizing the vertical sense of space, the other the longitudinal spatial development.

On the one hand, Viollet-de-Duc puts the emphasis on the centralized perception of space and its static quality resulting from the vertical impulse of the building and its sheer size.<sup>42</sup> Jeanneret could hardly remain indifferent to this. Indeed, in analyzing the siting of Hagya Sophia, he looked at the building in terms of its vertical axis, and a schematic section suggests that he was mindful of the inner consequences of the building's vertical impulse (fig 221, bottom right). Corroyer, on the other hand, provided the counterpoint. In his account of the development of the longitudinal typology of the Romanesque church, he discusses the influence of Byzantine architecture in terms of the typological hesitation between a central and longitudinal plan: the problem was to reconcile the central dome with a longitudinal spatial development. He sees the Hagia Sophia as a return to the rectangular scheme of the Roman basilica by sacrificing the side spaces. As already mentioned, Jeanneret had transcribed from his book: "Ste Sophie a voulu se souvenir de la basilique (surtout celle de Constantin de Rome) par la tendance à revenir au plan rectangulaire. – les bas côtés par contre sont bien sacrifiés."<sup>43</sup>

This debate informed Jeanneret's approach to the Turkish mosques, as demonstrated by sketches such as FLC1855, where he writes about the coexistence of a square and centralized plan with a longitudinal direction in the interior of the Hagia Sophia and of the Küçük Ayasofya Camii—the "small Hagia Sophia" to which both Viollet-le-Duc and Corroyer attribute a key role in the typological development of the Christian

<sup>42</sup> "Si donc l'église de Sainte-Sophie est spacieuse, elle le paraît plus encore peut-être qu'elle ne l'est réellement ... on éprouve un sentiment de bien-être et de calme, en même temps qu'une profonde impression de grandeur, et l'esprit est satisfait sans que le regard soit attiré plus particulièrement sur un point. Il semble que cela est, parce que cela ne peut être autrement et que l'œuvre tout entière ait poussé de terre sans effort et sans que le travail ou la difficulté vaincue apparaissent nulle part." Viollet-le-Duc, *De la décoration*, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Jeanneret, *Carnet A2* (19)108, 33.

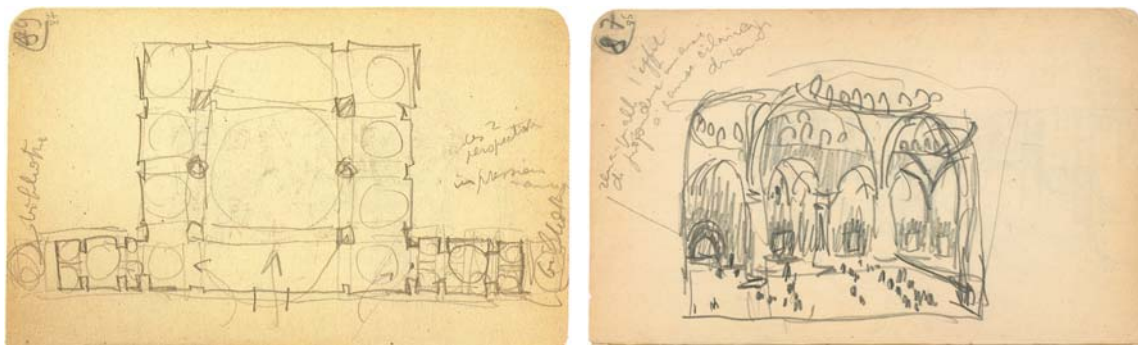


FIG. 224 Jeanneret. Bayezid Camii. Plan.

FIG. 225 Jeanneret. Bayezid Camii. Perspective of the prayer hall.

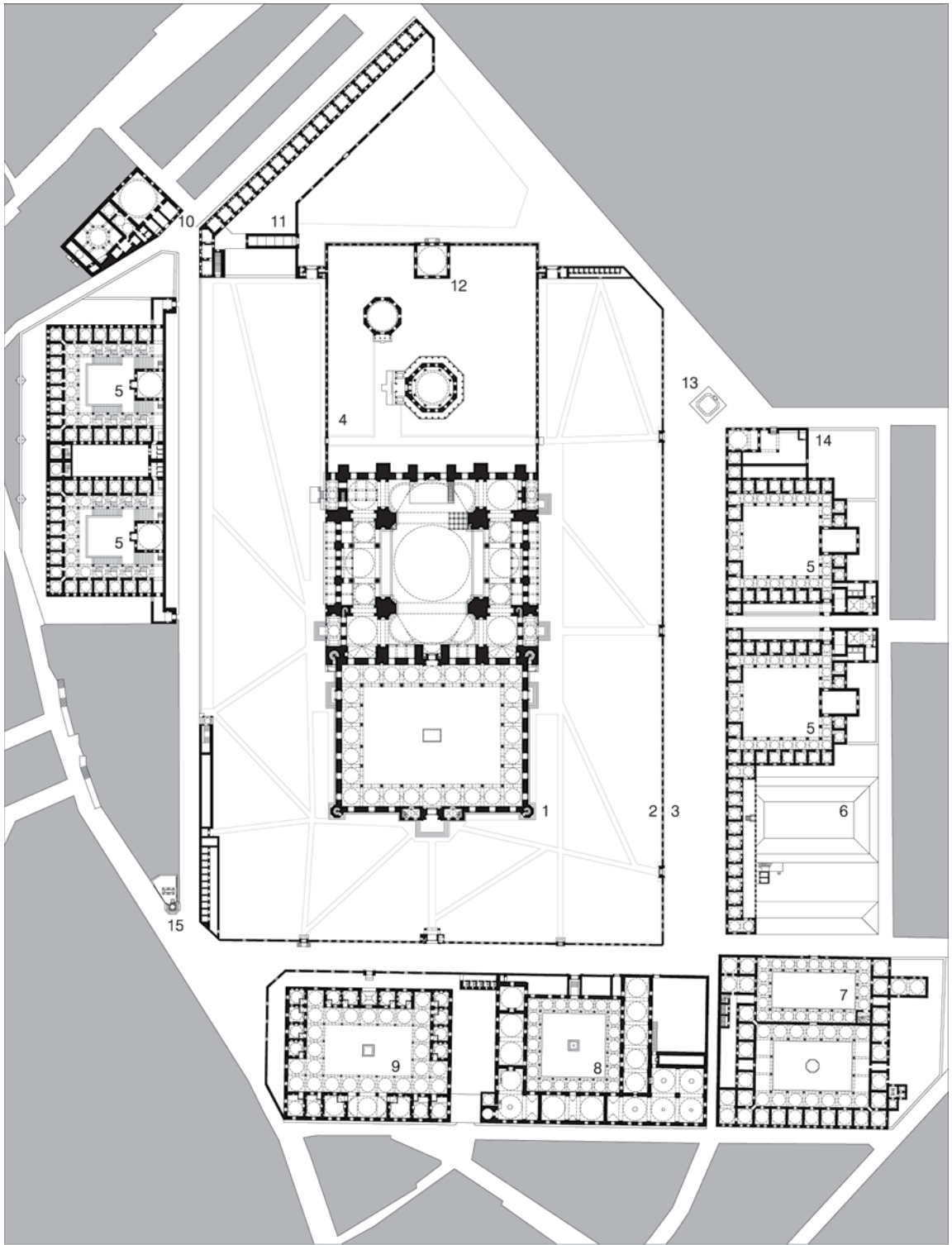
church. And in Paris, we have seen, longitudinal direction and vertical expanse were two key aspects of his interpretation of Notre-Dame.

Despite the lack of drawings of the Hagia Sophia's interior, three sketches suggest Jeanneret's attempt to comprehend the coexistence of a longitudinal and vertical direction. The first one is the schematic elevation registering the different treatment of the entrance side and of the opposite façade. He writes: "Derrière c'est fermé. Il y a donc 1 direction, 1 tête" (fig. 221). This is further explored in a drawing registering the succession of projecting volumes of the semi-domes of the altar and its windows, in which he examines the balance between the vertical axis of the main dome and the horizontal sequence of semi-domes (fig. 222). The comparison with a drawing of the central scheme of Edirne's Selimiye Camii is instructive (fig. 223). In both sketches Jeanneret added the annotation "*d'après Klip*," which indicates that the issue was discussed by the two friends.

In sum, being aware of the technical aspect, Jeanneret was seemingly striving to comprehend the experiential dimension of the basilica. Jeanneret focused on its aesthetic result as an assembly of simple forms, both extending the hilltop vertically and accusing its longitudinal development. In the interior, he certainly felt the dual thrust upwards and forwards, which is so palpable to any visitor. The problem, I think, was how to transpose the clarity of the structural scheme into an equally clear architectural experience—a spatial intention, so to speak, equivalent to the diagrammatic synthesis which he so often sought.

The answer came, at least partially, from the classical mosques of Istanbul. These would enable him to come to terms with this double directionality. A paradigmatic example is a sketch of the interior of the Bayezid Camii (fig. 224, 225). As mentioned above, this mosque broadly follows the typological features of the Hagia Sophia, the same space conception and lighting principle. Jeanneret's annotation (fig. 225) reveals his attention to the depth of space and light: "remarquable l'effet de profondeur immense à cause éclairage du haut." It suffices to visit both buildings to understand that, if Jeanneret considered these effects remarkable in the mosque, he certainly must have felt them much more intensely in the Byzantine predecessor. At this point, he was





1 Mosque 2 Avlu 3 Street 4 Cemetery 5 Madrasa 6 Medical School 7 Hospital 8 Hospice 9 Guesthouse 10 Bath house 11 HAdith college 12 Quran recitation school 13 Public fountain 14 Elementary school 15 Sinan's tomb

FIG. 226 Süleymaniye complex. Plan.



FIG. 227 Jeanneret. Süleymaniye Camii. Side façade, 1911.

equating the perceived space with its longitudinal and vertical developments. To fully comprehend the experiential dimension embodied in it, it is necessary to analyze his interpretation of the Süleymaniye mosque.

**SÜLEYMANIYE CAMII** To understand how Jeanneret looked at the classical mosques of Istanbul I will focus on the Süleymaniye mosque (1550-1557) for two reasons. First, it was through this case that Jeanneret summarized the Turkish mosque in his article for the *Feuille d'avis*. Second, it presents the highest achievement of the Ottoman *Küllüye*.

Although Sinan had achieved the elaborated central space of the square-based dome in the Şehzade Camii, this typology afforded little room for innovation. In the Süleymaniye, he returned to the Hagia Sophia model—a central dome extended by two semi-domes along the main axis and two flanking domed galleries (fig. 226-227). This apparent step backwards, however, entails a revision of the Byzantine spatial conception, achieving a balanced play between the central scheme of the Şehzade mosque and the longitudinal development of the Hagia Sophia. This is due to several choices made by Sinan, such as the square floor plan, the transparency between the central prayer hall and the flanking naves, the homogeneous light, the location of the *mihrab* in the plane of the *Qiblah* wall, and the overall proportion of the space.<sup>44</sup>

In experiential terms, the result may be summarized in the words of David Gebhard, who has argued that, in Ottoman mosques, the aim was to create an interior space which is always neutral in character. Neither the upward thrust of the dome endows the inner space with a dominant vertical movement, nor does the *mihrab* create

<sup>44</sup> The apparent step backwards in cases such as the Süleymaniye or the Rüsten Pasa Camii has been explained by Necipoğlu, who has shown that Sinan's work must be read as a set of responses to specific challenges of the past rather than part of a linear evolution of style evolving towards centralized schemes. Sinan challenged not only Hagia Sophia, but also the Ottoman-Islamic architectural tradition, filtering the Byzantine model through the heritage of Ottoman-Islamic architecture. Among the series of self-referential exercises developed within the confines of the canonical Ottoman idiom, Necipoğlu has seen the Şehzade mosque as a response to earlier imperial mosques inspired in the Hagia Sophia, the Süleymaniye as a direct answer to Hagia Sophia reformulating its overall scheme through the filter of earlier Ottoman imperial mosques, and the Selimaniye as a quest to surpass both the Hagia Sophia and the Üç Şerefeli dajmi. Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past."

any directional force. The resulting spatial *neutrality* is reinforced by the homogeneous distribution of the natural light sources. Gebhard quotes the English novelist Edward Morgan Foster to characterize such neutrality: “Our attitude [toward the Mosque] is vague ... Whereas a Christian Church or a Greek temple wakens definite sentiments, a mosque seems indeterminate ... It embodies no crisis, leads up through no gradation of nave and choir, and employs no hierarchy of priests.”<sup>45</sup> Like the Hagia Sophia, but more forcefully so, the Ottoman mosque attains this *neutral quality* by balancing the vertical axis with the horizontal one—respectively symbolic of the ascent to heaven and the direction of Mecca.<sup>46</sup>

The subtle inner balance between vertical and longitudinal axes is expressed on the exterior more forcefully. The mosque’s domes and semi-domes compose an outer stepped pyramidal silhouette that extends the vertical thrust of the hill upon which it rests. The structural simplicity of the mosque—which, in contrast with the expressive buttresses of the Hagia Sophia, is mainly confined to the four pillars supporting the central dome and the cascade of domes and semi-domes—directly translates into inner space and exterior configuration, expressing a simple, coherent solution of structure, space, and form. But in contrast with the Şehzade Camii, where the perfectly symmetrical scheme of the semi-domes produces a perfect stepped pyramidal silhouette, the absence of the side semi-domes emphasizes the longitudinal direction. This is reinforced by the longitudinal development of the exterior overall volume. First, the traditional courtyard preceding the entrance adds its volume to that of the mosque extending the planes of the side façades. Second, the cemetery further extends the façades on the opposite side. The result is a rectangular plan which is then echoed in the regular outer windowed wall of the *avlu* around the mosque. Finally, that wall is flanked on three sides by a street, mediating between the mosque and the social, religious, and educational facilities, tightly organized around it, expanding the regularity and longitudinal direction of the overall layout.

The monumental complex is skillfully terraced, adopting a single geometric principle and resulting in a powerful unit set upon a horizontal platform with a strong presence in the city’s silhouette. If the Selimiye Camii represents the culmination of the search for a large single-domed hall, the Süleymaniye provides the more elaborated

45 Gebhard, “Ottoman Mosque,” 272-274.

46 To evaluate the significance of the longitudinal axis it will suffice to recall James Dickie’s synthetic definition of a mosque: “One definition of a mosque could be a building erected over an invisible axis, an axis which is none the less the principal determinant of its design.” As far as the symbolic meaning of the *axis mundi* is concerned, Akin has noted that “we come across the use of such a vertical axis in Islam in the context of Muhammad ascending to Heaven to meet the Divine.” The most paradigmatic example is the Dome of the Rock—the Omar mosque, described at length in Schur’s *Sanctuaires*—built to commemorate the place from which Muhammad made his night journey to heaven. Akin, “Müezzîn Mahfili,” 72.

case of a complex conceived as a single, coherent unit.

This case is equally instructive with regard to the space experience underlying this typological conception. The experience preceding the prayer hall is structured through an elaborated sequence of spaces common to the classical Ottoman mosque. The peripheral facilities of the *Küllüye*, the street surrounding the windowed wall of the *avlu*, its green space, and the courtyard, constitute a succession of mediating spaces between the city and the inner hall, endowing the experience of the approach with a progressive isolation from daily urban life. The *avlu* offers several accesses, gathering people coming from different directions. From each portal, several paved paths develop throughout the garden. The three portals of the court mark a restricted passage onto its interior. Once inside, the ablution fountain gathers the three directions in the center of the space. After the cleansing ritual, one follows the direction of the mosque, reaching the prayer hall after crossing another portal. From there, one can only continue the journey spiritually through the symbolic gate, the *mihrab*. This spatial sequence—street, green *avlu*, arched colonnade, court opening to the sky, entrance narthex, central dome—interspersed by transitional constrict passages and low portals, always associated with a set of steps, constitutes an intentional elaborated rhythmic progression towards the prayer hall: a meandering, preparatory path to prayer.

In symbolic terms, the Süleymaniye's prayer hall is a representation of paradise. Several contemporary sources describe its dome in cosmological terms, while the *Qiblah* wall is covered with ceramic panels of flower motifs representing the garden of paradise. The Koranic texts inscribed in the several portals are invitations to enter paradise, evoking the straight path of the *Shariah*—the code of conduct of Islam to be followed by the Sunni orthodox believer. In short, its portals symbolize the gates of paradise, and the prayer hall paradise itself.<sup>47</sup> The elaborated access from street to prayer hall is therefore a symbolic journey. According to Egli, it evokes the *hegira*—the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca; it is a path of spiritual transformation, a rite of passage leading to the central hall, where the *mihrab* provides a symbolic gate to the hereafter.<sup>48</sup>

To sum up, the Süleymaniye complex is a particularly good example of the classical mosques of Istanbul: a clear geometrical architectural system, established with reference to a vertical and longitudinal axis, and a meandering spatiotemporal experience charged with symbolic meaning towards the absolute space under the dome of the prayer hall. Despite the neutral quality of the prayer hall, its directionality exists

47 See Gülru Necipoğlu-Kafadar, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 92–117.

48 Egli, *Sinan*, 165–168.

without tension. Gebhard is right when arguing that “attention is drawn to the *mihrab* only when the building is being used for prayer, and then it is not the hall itself which suggests a directional movement, but the individuals involved in the religious ceremony.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, in the inside, directionality is established by the rite, implying an existential experience of spiritual transport.

**THE SPHINX AND THE SYMBOLIC JOURNEY** When Jeanneret writes about the Turkish mosque in his article for the *Feuille d'avis*, he describes it in generic terms, treating the classical Turkish mosque as a type. But his account corresponds to the Süleymaniye complex. It is not hard to understand why Jeanneret chose the Süleymaniye as a type. Sinan's design shows a very mature and consolidated stage of the Turkish mosque, in which the typology attains a revised synthesis, the complex being designed as a single unit, ruled by consistent geometric and proportional principles.<sup>50</sup>

Jeanneret's description suggests that the Turkish mosque solved his conflicting feelings about the Hagia Sophia by evoking his early reading of Schuré. In recognizing the longitudinal development of the complex ending in the vertical space of the prayer hall, Jeanneret associated the Ottoman mosque with Schuré's image of the sphinx, reconciling the cosmic and the pantheistic axes which provide the means for an epistemological experience. Such an interpretation entails a symbolic dimension and the idea of a meaningful experience constructed upon the dialectical interaction of classical order and meandering path.

Looking at Jeanneret's article, one may start by noting that he understood the prayer hall as an irradiating center which structures the whole. His description is hierarchical in terms of center-periphery. He starts with the prayer hall, following with the description of the sequential arrangement of spaces from inside out, that is, from the sacred inside to preparatory court and *avlu*. Underlying this order is the awareness of the direct correspondence between structure, inner space, and outer form, later expressed by Le Corbusier in the article “L'Illusion des plans”: “Un plan procède du dedans au dehors. Un édifice est comme une bulle de savon. Cette bulle est parfaite et harmonieuse si le souffle est bien réparti, bien réglé de l'intérieur. L'extérieur est le résultat d'un intérieur.”<sup>51</sup>

49 Gebhard, “Ottoman Mosque,” 274.

50 The most obvious reference to Süleymaniye Camii lies in the mention of the geometry and unique longitudinal axis which rule the overall complex. Some additional features described in the text are also specificities of this mosque, such as the monumental portals *as large as houses*, which Jeanneret also drew. These are an innovation of Sinan's design for the Süleymaniye Camii which he did not try to achieve in his following works. They are unusually high and furnished with rows of windows on each side. On the monumental portals see Günay, *Sinan*, 66. Also, note that among the ten drawings that illustrate the 1926 publication, five are from the Süleymaniye mosque and one is a silhouette of Istanbul showing the minarets of the Süleymaniye and Hagia Sophia thrusting upwards.

51 Le Corbusier-Saugnier, “L'Illusion des plans,” *L'Esprit nouveau* no. 15 (1922): 1769. Note, in passing, that Sinan



The generating forces of this formal and spatial system are the vertical and longitudinal axes contained in the prayer hall, each embodying a symbolic and experiential dimension. Jeanneret describes the prayer hall as a secluded space, oriented towards Mecca and developing vertically:

“Il faut un lieux silencieux qui ait un visage tourné vers la Mecque. Il doit être vaste pour que le cœur se sente d’aise, haut pour que les prières y montent ... Rien ne se dérobera au regard : on entre, on voit l’immense carré couvert de nattes dorées toujours neuves ; aucun meuble, pas de sièges, mais seulement quelques pupitres bas portant des corans devant lesquels on s’accroupit ; et d’un coup d’œil on voit les quatre angles, on sent leur présence claire et l’on bâtit le grand cube perforé de petites fenêtres d’où s’élèvent les quatre doubleaux gigantesques qu’unissent les pendentifs ; on voit alors scintiller la couronne lumineuse des mille petites fenêtres de la coupole. Au-dessus, c’est un espace vaste dont on ne saisit pas la forme; car la demi-sphère à ce charme de se soustraire à la mesure ... Le mihrab, face à l’entrée, n’est qu’une porte sur la Kaabâ. Il n’a point de saillie, point de corps.”<sup>52</sup>

Beyond form, one may recognize in this vertical and longitudinal direction the experience of spiritual transport (*le mihrab, face à l’entrée, n’est qu’une porte sur la Kaabâ*) and expanding sense of body self (*un lieux ... vaste pour que le cœur se sente d’aise, haut pour que les prières y montent*).

The description of the sequential spaces that follows also surpasses form to entail an experiential and symbolic dimension. Its symbolic meaning is revealed in the reference to the overall direction towards Mecca as a symbol of unity and faith:

“Il faut au devant du sanctuaire une cour dallée de marbre, ceinturée d’un portique ... Sous ce portique carré<sup>53</sup> ouvrent trois portes, une au nord, une autre au sud, et une autre à l’ouest. Au centre est le temple d’eau pour les ablutions ... Du dehors les grands murs de la cour font un prisme sévère de pierres appareillées ; les trois portails s’y ouvrent sous une chute de stalactites. Ce prisme serait à l’ensemble de la mosquée, comme les pattes du grand sphinx qu’elle forme la nuit sur la crête de Stamboul. Et puis il faut un parvis, aire déserte et pierreuse où sont quelques cyprès. Des chemins dallés conduisent aux portes de la mosquée et vers le cimetière envahi d’herbes folles sous de séculaires platanes ; ce cimetière fait pendant à la cours, de l’autre côté du sanctuaire. Un mur de pierre taillée, percé de mille baies grillagées, laisse de l’autre côté les rues bordées de *hans*. Des portails monumentaux, grands comme des maisons, ouvrent juste où sont les chemins dallés du parvis.”<sup>54</sup>

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... described the Süleymaniye’s domical structure as “bubbles on the surface of the sea.” Necipoğlu, “Challenging the Past,” 174.

<sup>52</sup> Le Corbusier, *Almanach*, 55-61. First published in *Feuille d’Avis*, 22 November 1911, and later incorporated in *Voyage d’Orient*, 76-77. In the later edition the word “montent” (first sentence) is replaced by “respirent.”

<sup>53</sup> The word “carré” only appears in *Almanach*.

<sup>54</sup> The last sentence of this paragraph was added in *Almanach*.

Les *hans* font tout à l'entour, des quadrilatères sévères. Sur leurs toits en terrasse, s'aligne la multitude des petites coupoles de plomb. Ils s'axent, se mesurent et se proportionnent sur le sanctuaire dont ils dépendent ...

Flanquant le sanctuaire, il faut encore des minarets bien hauts afin qu'aux heures réglées sur le soleil, on entende au loin la voix stridente des muezzins appelant en chantant ... La ville de bois est autour. Le sanctuaire blanc pousse ses dômes sur ses grands cubes de maçonnerie, en sa cité de pierre.

Une géométrie élémentaire discipline les masses: le carré, le cube, la sphère. En plan, c'est un complexe rectangulaire d'où l'axe est unique. Le rayonnement des axes de toutes les mosquées sur terre musulmane, vers la pierre noire de la Kaabâ, est le grandiose symbole de l'unité de la foi."<sup>55</sup>

This description reveals that Jeanneret was attentive to the sequential arrangement of spaces. Although hierarchical in terms of center-periphery, he was clearly aware of the sequential spaces as a comprehensive experience from the city to the prayer hall, of the symbolic dimension of the progression, and of the gradual separation from daily concerns (*Il faut un lieux silencieux*). He could himself experience the effect of such gradual intimacy and sacred character during his visits. And his repeated interest for the association of portals and steps—from Süleymaniye Camii (FLC2389) to Yeni Camii (FLC5874) or Nouri Osmaniye Camiil (VdO Carnets, 2:68-69[67])—may well relate to his attention to the symbolic journey. Indeed, this elaborated spatial progression is repeatedly explored in Jeanneret's earlier readings. Schuré, for instance, emphasizes it while writing about the fourteenth-century Sultan Hassan mosque, in Cairo. Another case is Loti and his account of the mosques of Cairo.<sup>56</sup>

The mediating key to understand this interpretation is Schuré's discussion of the ancient symbols of Egypt. In the chapter devoted to Muslim Egypt, he writes on the transition between the mosques' square plan and round dome as reflecting a spiritual problem of Islam, which is not capable of making the transition from the infinite to the finite. The same analogy leads him to assert that the longitudinal development of the mosques reflects the Muslim conception of the Absolute. Also, he asserts that the Muslim prayer rituals mark the path of the sun: muslims in Egypt not only turn towards Mecca, they also turn towards the rising sun.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the mosques incorporate the essence of the ancient symbol of the sphinx, just as Muslim rituals embody the legacy of the Egyptian understanding of the universe that transverses all religions.

<sup>55</sup> Le Corbusier, *Almanach*, 55-61.

<sup>56</sup> Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 50-55. In Loti see also the depiction of the access of the early Christian church of Saint-Sergius, in Cairo, and the laudatory mentions to the secluded space of the mosques of Morocco, Persia, and Istanbul. Loti, *La Mort de Philae* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1908), 30-31, 35-36, 125-133. Note that also the French *hôtel* reconciles the notion of a temporal experience with an architectural composition conceived from the inside out, much as it happens, as already mentioned, in the nineteenth-century English picturesque design and in the Villa Fallet.

<sup>57</sup> Schuré, *Sanctuaires*, 40, 60-61.

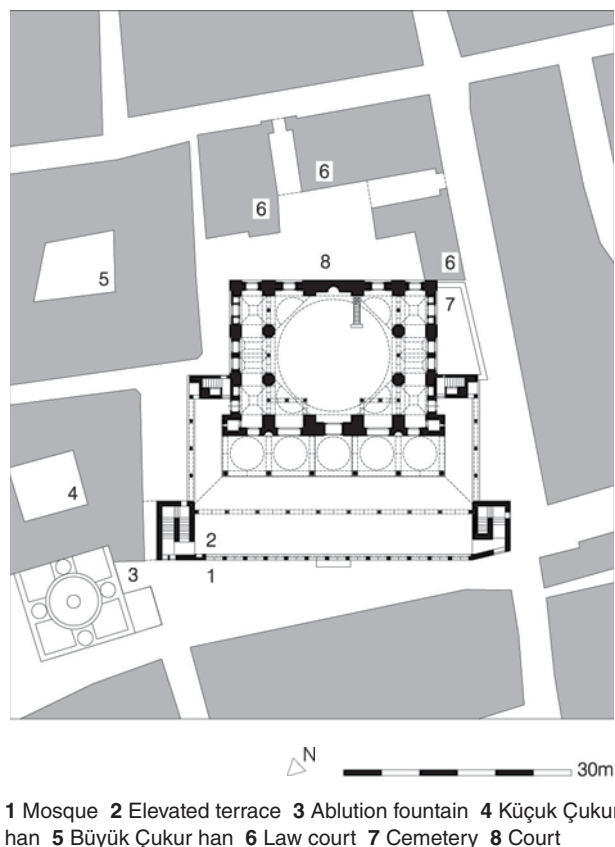


FIG. 228 Istanbul. Rüsten Pasa Complex. Plan.

In associating the Ottoman mosque with a sphinx, Jeanneret was not looking at it in purely formal terms, but as a composition of simple forms submitted to a vertical (cosmic) and a horizontal (pantheistic) axis, associated with an existential experience. For Schuré, this is the experience of an ontological episteme. Jeanneret seems to have read it as an elaborated narrative leading from the bustle of life to contemplation. In its essence, his understanding of the Muslim symbolic journey recasts his earlier experiential pattern of the Jura, constructed upon the dialectics of the picturesque and the sublime. But here, it also entails the dialectical interaction of classical order and meandering path, which extends back to his 1909 visit to Versailles.

**RÜSTEN PASA CAMII** Sinan's Rüsten Pasa Camii (1561-1563) provides an exquisite variation of the Ottoman typology. Its most interesting specificity results from the adaptation of the Ottoman type to a dense urban area of narrow commercial streets which did not leave much space to build the mosque. While the ancillary facilities of the *kül-lye* were integrated in the dense urban fabric, Sinan raised the mosque above the street level and replaced the courtyard with a narrow elevated terrace. A vaulted structure, functioning as a marketplace at the street level, creates the elevated platform upon which the building rests (fig. 228).

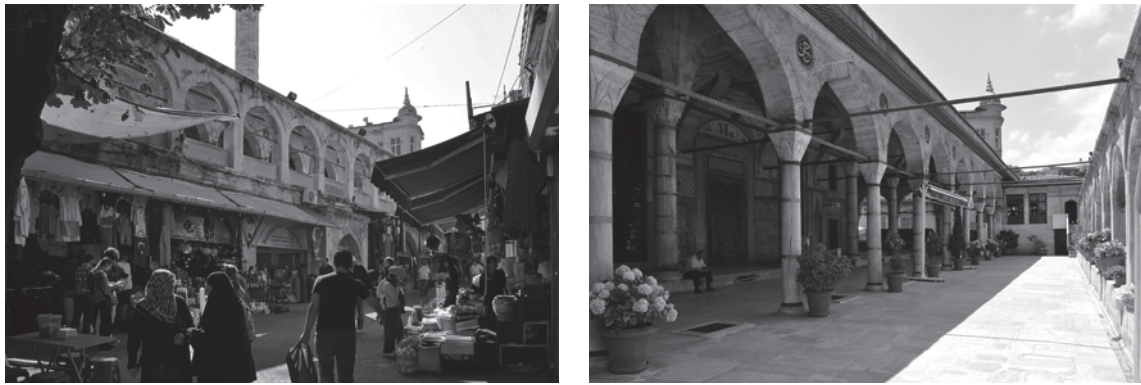


FIG. 229 Istanbul. Rüsten Pasa Camii. Westearn façade seen from the street.  
 FIG. 230 Rüsten Pasa Camii. Elevated terrace seen from the top of the access stairs.

As one walks throughout the streets, the mosque's presence is revealed by an arcade above the peripheral walls of the vaulted structure (fig. 229). Due to the lack of space, the ablution basin occupies an adjacent lot at street level. Access to the mosque's floor level is gained through four staircases dissimulated between the market shops facing the streets. Replacing the traditional court, the function of the elevated terrace remains that of creating a space in which the several directions are gathered and directed towards the interior, filtering the outside world.

The stairs at the extremities of the northwest terrace replace the usual axial portal to compensate for the lack of depth. The dim space of the stairs, enclosed and narrow, contrasts in scale and light with the street and terrace, the filtering role being enhanced by the dogleg movement. At the top, it brings us to the farthest point from the main entrance, providing an oblique approach that avoids the frontal view (fig. 230). The main entrance to the mosque is preceded by two porticos, a domed one adjacent to the façade, and an outer one with a pitched roof. If these dramatize the narrow space, they are also a delicate device to improve the sense of depth along the approach. On the one hand, they make the façade recede to a shadowy background. On the other, they establish a rhythmic sequence of spaces and progression from light to dark before reaching the homogeneous light of the vast vertical interior beyond the embrasure of the small door.

The purpose of the peripheral arcade is fully revealed when looking outwards. By contrast with the traditional enclosed courts, it acts as a subtle transparent filter, suppressing the presence of the noisy streets below and projecting the view forwards, giving continuity to the rhythm of the porticos next to the façade.

Everything, from the outer ablution fountain to the porticos, contributes to intensify the sense of depth and spatial progression, creating obstacles and spaces of reorientation. In short, the elevated plateau is an elaborated architectural device found by Sinan to solve the transition between the daily life scenario of the dense urban fabric and the sacred space of meditation, exploring the symbolic path to prayer.

Inside, Sinan used the traditional transversal plan of earlier mosques such as



FIG. 231 Rüsten Pasa Camii. Prayer hall.

FIG. 232 Jeanneret. Rüsten Pasa Camii. Prayer hall. See also FLC1855, FLC1834.

Üçşerefeli Camii (fig. 211), now with a central dome on eight piers, flanked by rows of three smaller domes on either side. The result is a totally free square floor plan below the central dome, and a fluid transition between central and lateral space. Jeanneret's sketch of the interior clearly highlights this spatial continuity (fig. 231-232). Notably, his view shows the transversal axis, not the longitudinal one through the *mihrab*, which lacks depth. As in the Bayezid Camii already discussed (fig. 213, 224, 225), Jeanneret seems particularly interested in the depth of space, articulated here by the two aspects that are both highlighted in his drawing: the double levels of galleries on the sides, and the lighting effect produced by a pattern of small round holes in the external walls, acting as a second filter that amplifies the sense of depth, in exquisite accordance with the pattern of the tile panels on the walls.

**VERTICAL PROGRESSION AND ARCHITECTURAL MEDIATION** The most interesting aspect of Jeanneret's attention to Rüsten Pasa Camii is the relationship it establishes with the exterior. Attentive to the temporal experience of architecture as he was, Jeanneret would have easily noticed Sinan's elaborated access and the intimate spatial segregation attained in the silent elevated plateau. In fact, the Rüsten Pasa Camii provides a heightened experience of being merged in a hectic daily life and becoming suddenly isolated from it, though still remaining in the heart of it.

Part of the richness of this experience lies in the way the ascending path redefines the view over the exterior, directing our gaze to the far distance. Among the few graphic elements left, a photograph shows Jeanneret's interest in the particular relationship between the porticos, the peripheral arcade and the view beyond (fig. 233, 234). Taken slightly at an angle, it points towards the view framed by the peripheral arcade, while the presence of the outer portico in the foreground registers the depth and rhythm of the two spatial screens. One easily senses in this frame Jeanneret's awareness of the mediating role of the elevated plateau and his attention to the way the peripheral arcade frames the relationship with the exterior, suppressing the presence of the adjoined frantic streets to project the gaze into the far distance, above the roofs of the





FIG. 233 Rüsten Pasa Camii. Peripheral arcade and porticos preceding the main façade.  
 FIG. 234 Jeanneret. Rüsten Pasa Camii. Peripheral arcade, 1911.

wooden houses.<sup>58</sup>

This particular case shows the importance that Muslim culture attached to spatial progression and space seclusion. Jeanneret was certainly attentive to the way the elevated terrace and the temporal experience of the access mediate between the city, the mosque, and the far landscape view. This must have reminded him of the Carthusian cells at Ema, and how they redefine the landscape view from the elevated loggia. It is highly tantalizing to relate this experience with Le Corbusier's elevated dwellings, proposing an ascending access to a secluded living space reconnecting the perceiver with the far landscape from the intimacy either of their roof terraces, balconies, or fenestrated rooms.

**THE ESKI CAMII AND THE ULU CAMII** The same longitudinal progression that we noted in Sinan's classical mosques is already present, if less explicitly, a century earlier in the Eski Camii that Jeanneret visited in Edirne at the start of his Turkish stay, or in the even earlier Ulu Camii that he visited in Bursa near the end of his stay. In the brief survey of the evolution of the Turkish mosque, I have described the main features of this typology—the multi-domed mosques. I also mentioned the early Ottoman attempt to integrate the references of the pre-Islamic prototype—the oculus and pool—while separating them from the prayer hall in the double-centered mosques. In comparing

58 Gresleri has suggested Jeanneret's interest in the Galata Bridge, although barely visible in the photograph. Gresleri, "Itinerant Education: Istanbul," in *LC Before LC*, 179. I am however tempted to see in it Jeanneret's interest in the way the elevated plateau provides a view over the far landscape, framed by the arcade. A similar interest is found in a sketch of a mosque published in *Almanach* (FLC 2390)—probably the Kara Ahmed Pasha Camii—noting the way a window of the court frames the green space of the cemetery at the rear: "Vue très jolie (la fenêtre est très grande)." Le Corbusier, *Almanach*, 56.



FIG. 235 Edirne. Eski Camii.  
 FIG. 236 Edirne. Eski Camii. Main entrance.

the Eski Camii and the Ulu Camii, it is tempting to read both mosques in the light of a process of gradual elimination of these pre-Islamic references (fig. 208-209). The older Ulu Camii presents a twenty-dome rectangular prayer hall of four rows with five domes each. Seemingly assimilating the scheme of the *cemevi* (the house of gathering of the nomadic tribes of Anatolia), the main and side entrances, together with the *mihrab*, define two axes intersecting at the central dome of the second bay, marked by an oculus and basin (replaced by a larger one in the nineteenth century). The rectangular scheme thus subtly displaces the pool to the entrance side. The Eski Camii, built a few years later, has a square plan with three bays of three domes each. While the central dome was kept higher than the others, the side portals were displaced to the first bay. The oculus and the no longer extant basin were maintained at the intersection of the axes, in the dome next to the main entrance.

What interests us here is that, in the Eski Camii, the displacement of the central focus of the *cemevi* towards the entrance emphasizes the longitudinal progression towards the *mihrab*. Underlying this typological development is an elaborate architectural and symbolic experience. The transition between the exterior and the inner space is articulated by a five-bay domed narthex. This creates a gradual progression from light to dark and imprints depth to the main entrance. As one approaches, the presence of the longitudinal axis is marked by the difference between the central dome of the narthex and its cross-vaulted side bays, and by the raised cornice at the center (fig. 235). Inside, this is further reinforced by the light sources. The dim space is lit through windows on the peripheral walls. Small windows are pierced into the drums of each dome in order to create an inner homogeneous light. Due to its lantern, the dome next to the main entrance is more strongly lit than the remaining space (fig. 236). This device reveals an extremely delicate treatment of light which extends the

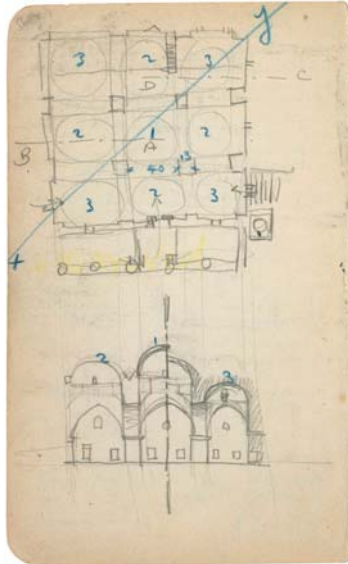


FIG. 237 Jeanneret. Edirne. Eski Camii. Plan and cross-section.  
 FIG. 238 Edirne. Eski Camii. Diagonal view. Mihrab on the right.

subtle progression from light to dark introduced by the outer portico. It is the space under the lantern that articulates the relationship of side entrances with longitudinal axis. There, the lateral accesses join the main entrance, taking the path towards the *mihrab*. The longitudinal axis is then further reinforced by the subtle hierarchy of the domes raised by octagonal drums along it, while in the rest of the modules the transition to the dome is achieved by simple pendentives.

It remains to note that, in both cases, the simple regular form of the envelope results from the modular association, topped by the volumes of the various domes.

**SPACE-FORM, RITE, AND DRIVING AXIS** The first Turkish drawing of Jeanneret's sketchbook is the floor plan and half section of the Eski Camii, visited en route to Istanbul (fig. 237, 238). Both sketch and notes reveal his ability to read and interpret architectural space, paying careful attention to the major architectural themes. In general terms, the building seems to have impressed him for its formal simplicity. The plan registers the modular scheme, distinguishing between the structure and the receded fill-in walls at the periphery. Particular attention is given to the fluidity of the diagonal view and the hierarchy introduced in the regular space by the domes emphasizing the center. This hierarchy is further analyzed in the cross-section. In his annotations (*VdO Carnets*, 2:55 [53]) he commented on the subtle centrality of space which results from the higher central dome: "Ce qu'il y a d'étonnant c'est qu'avec 9 coupoles de même diamètre, le maximum est donné à celle 1. L'œil ne peut pas se faire à l'idée d'une égalité des diamètres."

His interpretation seems to focus on formal aspects:

"Impression immense et définitive due au carré parfait qu'on embrasse entièrement. Le sol jaune des nattes absolument libre. Toute la structure peinte à la chaux, et les im-



FIG. 239 Jeanneret. Bursa. Ulu Camii. Plan and cross-section.  
 FIG. 240 Bursa. Ulu Camii. Diagonal view. Light contrast in the center. Mihrab on the right.

menses surfaces des 4 piliers aidant, suppression du sentiment d'encombrement ; vue diagonale immense xy. En tout 96 fenêtres, d'une moyenne de  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  m<sup>2</sup>! C'est approximativement le 1 pour 400 ou 1 pour 800 de la surface pleine."

Also, he writes on the relation between the inner space and the exterior, resulting in a unique envelope: "L'Eglise entière a 1 unique enveloppe." Underlying this note is the consideration of the relationship between construction, inner space and exterior form.

And yet, his attention to the simple form of space is associated with human activity. On one level, Jeanneret writes of the bodily perception of form (*impression immense et définitive due au carré parfait qu'on embrasse entièrement*). On another level, he draws an arrow in each of the entrances. The resonance with the arrows he drew in Perret's plans suggests his concern with the narrative provided by space: in this case, three paths gathering in a single point and then turning towards the *mihrab*. This shows that the issue of the temporal experience of the mosques is already present at the beginning of the Turkish itinerary: the cardinal problem is not the promenade; but architecture cannot be thought of outside its experiential dimension.

Let us now turn to the older Ulu Camii, in Bursa. Jeanneret visited it at the end of the Turkish stay, meaning that his approach is informed by the Istanbul sojourn. He drew a synthetic sketch of the floor plan and cross-section, which are particularly revealing when compared with those of Edirne (fig. 239, 240). Here too, he notes that the beholder perceives the square form of the inner space, enhanced by the absence of ornament. But now, Jeanneret's attention to the space-form is enriched by the loose elements providing ritual referent. The plan is synthetically drawn, registering the grid of the domed squares within the rectangular form. Particular emphasis is given to the modular system of domed spaces and the elements of the Muslim ritual



dispersed within the space, the *mihrab*, the *minbar*, the *müezzin mahfili*, the *kürsü*, and the pool.<sup>59</sup> This emphasis is evident in the sketch as well as in the annotations. In highlighting these elements, the drawing reveals that Jeanneret was focused on the relationship between the regular space, the modular rhythm and human activity. This corresponds to the layering of two distinct orders, one expressing the absolute through a simple geometric form—the grid and envelope—and the other submitted to ritual—the loose elements. Significantly, while the sketch emphasizes their independence from the cubic volume, these elements are connected to the longitudinal path towards the *mihrab*. In contrast with his sketch of the Eski Camii, Jeanneret omits the side entrances, but he overemphasizes the furniture-like elements, the main entrance door and steps, and the two minarets flanking them.

Jeanneret is clearly thinking of the ritual path towards the *mihrab*, possibly pairing it with the meandering path to prayer of the Classical mosques of Istanbul, now internalized by the dispersed elements within the regular space. Here, due to its scale and central location, the pool interrupts the longitudinal progression, while the remaining elements are out of axis. Arranged according to the rite, the elements are nonetheless submitted to a meaningful axis, a direction. In short, the axis condenses the Absolute and the phenomenal; it is a driving intention in which the two distinct orders meet—the geometric space-form and the meandering experience within the free space.

To fully understand the experiential dimension and aesthetic categories involved in this changing attitude towards the multi-domed mosque it is necessary to return to Istanbul focusing on two aspects, the notion of volume-form and the nature of rite.

Jeanneret's attention to the pure geometric forms of Ottoman and Byzantine architecture has already been noted. If, when assembled, geometric solids are able to concurrently define a building system and a compositional principle, when isolated they can generate tensions in the intervening space, defining a particular conception of space. This is the case of the isolated octagonal tombs randomly arranged within the enclosed space of the cemeteries adjoined to the classical mosques of Istanbul. Enriching the geometric play of the main building, these volumes generate tensions between them and the mosque within the enclosed space of the *avlu*, like sculptures within a square. In the Hagia Sophia there is no cemetery precinct and tombs and fountains

<sup>59</sup> These elements make part of Muslim rituals: the *mihrab*, we have seen, indicates Mecca's direction, defining together with the main entrance the longitudinal axis of the mosque. The *minbar* is a pulpit used by the imam located to the right of the *mihrab*. The *müezzin mahfili* is a two level lodge from which the *müezzin*—the mosque's officer—sings, answering to the imam prayers. The *Kürsü* is a throne or big chair, from which the imam reads the Quran. In imperial mosques there is also the *hünker mahfili*, an elevated lodge used by the sultan to pray. Lastly, in the older mosques like the Ulu Camii there is a pool, later replaced by the ablution fountain in the courtyard.





FIG. 241 Jeanneret. Mosque and tombs, 1911.

FIG. 242 Jeanneret. Sultan Selim I Camii. North-east view, 1911.  
 FIG. 243 Istanbul. Sultan Selim I Camii. Side access between tombs.

are randomly arranged around the basilica participating in the meandering access. In cases such as the Bayezid or the Sultan Selim mosques, one is easily led to cross the walled cemetery, meandering between the freestanding tombs and the mosque.

Jeanneret's interest in these tombs emerges in several annotations and drawings (fig. 241).<sup>60</sup> An interesting case is the sketch of the Sultan Selim Camii, highlighting the geometry of the freestanding tombs in association with the remarkable geometric simplicity of the mosque (fig. 242, 243). Although Jeanneret was not fully aware of the possibilities of this ordering principle, he was certainly receptive to the experience they provide. Thinking of his German work on town planning, there are reasons to believe that he was attentive to these simple volume-forms and the way they participate in the experience of the enclosed spaces of the cemeteries and *avlu*, introducing depth and inducing movement. Moreover, Jeanneret could easily transpose this principle to

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, *VdO Carnets*, 2:59 [57]; Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 71, 84, 119, passim. For Jeanneret's attention to the simple forms and their proportions on the Sultan Selim mosque see, for instance, FLC1858-V.



FIG. 244 Edirne. Selimiye Camii. Prayer hall.

the interior of the mosques through the Sittesque analogy between urban and architectural space.

An interesting feature of the elements of Muslim ritual such as the *minbar*, *müezzîn mahfili*, or *kürsü* is that, with the exception of the *mihrab*, they can be arranged differently depending on the mosque. An obvious example is the *müezzîn mahfili*, which Jeanneret had seen next to the main entrance, as in the Bayezid Camii (fig. 213), next to the *minbar*, as in the Eski Camii (fig. 209, 238), or in the center of the main dome, as in the Selimiye Camii (fig. 216, 244).<sup>61</sup> In Byzantine churches converted into mosques, the association of these elements with a second order layered upon the architectural form is conveyed with particularly evidence. Because they align with Mecca, they are slightly rotated in relation to the churches' axis. Due to its small scale, this is particularly expressive in the case of the Küçük Ayasofya Camii, the old Saints Sergius and Bacchus Byzantine church (fig. 245, 246). With the introduction of this second axial order, these elements become apparently detached from the architectural layout and emerge as free objects organizing the regular space of the mosque according to ritual. In the Hagia Sophia these elements are added in the same way, though less evident due to the scale of the inner space and the subsequent looser tension between the two ori-

<sup>61</sup> In the Selimiye Camii, the arrangement of the *müezzîn mahfili* in the center of the main dome marks the point of interception between the longitudinal and the vertical axes. In experiential terms it introduces a last obstacle in the symbolic journey, for it obstructs the view of the *minbar* along the main axis and forces one to deviate in order to reach it. The unusual low ceiling of the *müezzîn mahfili* and its fountain can equally be seen as a reinforcement of such quest. Akin has suggested that Sinan placed them in the centre of the prayer hall as a symbolic evocation of the pre-Islamic traditions' distant past. Akin, "Müezzîn Mahfili," 76-79. For our purposes, the significance of this evocation is that it illuminates the complex dialog between the vertical and longitudinal axes involved in the typological development of the Turkish mosque and the meandering symbolic journey associated with it. Like in this case, the central pool in the Ulu Camii further extends the tortuous symbolic journey.



**FIG. 245** Küçük Ayasofya Camii—old byzantine church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. Altar with *mihrab* and *mimbar*.  
**FIG. 246** Küçük Ayasofya Camii. View towards the entrance, *müezzin mahfili* and fountain. *Mihrab* in the foreground.

entations. In sum, the result is a free regular space organized by freestanding objects providing human referent. Jeanneret visited the old church, and he would easily have sensed the layering of this second order within the pre-existing regular space.<sup>62</sup>

Also, the attention that Jeanneret paid to these elements is clearly associated with Muslim rituals in six pages of his sketchbook, where he attempted to transcribe the rituals of prayer, the ritualized movements involved in it, the relations between these movements, the ritual elements and space, the gestures, and even the combination of the ceremonial rites with the chants' tones (fig. 247). Jeanneret was certainly thinking of this collective experience in terms of Dalcroze's notion of *moving* or *living plastic*, that is, as a lived bodily experience of spiritual resonance.<sup>63</sup>

If we return to the comparison between the sketches of the Eski Camii and the Ulu Camii, it becomes evident that Istanbul allowed Jeanneret to re-evaluate the typology of the multi-dome mosques, layering his initial attention to the regular space-form with his later attention to a second order established by the ritual. Both are submitted to a guiding axis, a driving intention disclosing the Absolute through the phenomenal. The resonances with Le Corbusier's work of the 1920s need scarcely be mentioned.

<sup>62</sup> For Jeanneret's attention to the Küçük Ayasofya Camii and its links with Corroyer see FLC1855.

<sup>63</sup> In this respect, it is worth mentioning Jeanneret's sketch of the Bayezid Camii (fig. 225), in which Kries saw Jeanneret's interest in the masses of people moving in the light falling from the ceiling, involving an analogy with the stage. Kries, "S, M, L, XL", 163-191. Two episodes illustrate the Romantic context within which Jeanneret equated Muslim rituals. One is the episode of a wedding celebration in the chapter "Danube" of *Voyage d'Orient*, in which Jeanneret writes about the chorus of women, dances and music symbolism as hymns expressing the emotion of the people, deifying the Danube and the plain. The other is the account of the sacred ritual of the festival of the Virgin in the Mont Athos involving collective manifestations through chants and rites, where the hallucinatory and spiritual mood he experienced resonates with the idea of spiritual transport. See Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 40-42, 146-150.

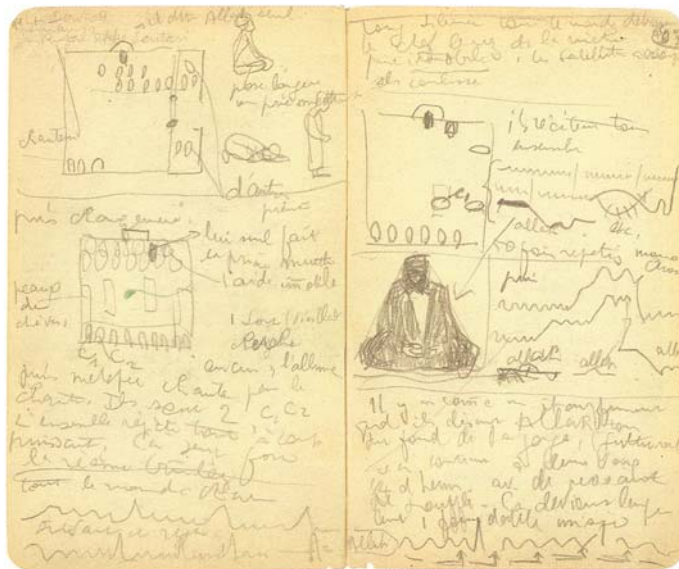


FIG. 247 Jeanneret. Two of the six sketchbook pages registering the Muslim rites.

**GREEN MOSQUE (YEŞİL CAMII)** Let us finally draw attention to the double-centered mosque. As already mentioned, the scheme consists of two main domes expanded by single-domed square *iwans* to answer to its multiple functional requirements. The dimension and location of the ancillary spaces depend on their function, resulting in a reverse T shape plan. The exterior expresses the inner functional layout and volumetric assembly of the various spaces (fig. 210).

The Green mosque is located at the top of a hill. The ascending approach consists, today, of an axial paved path and stairs. The first space to cross after the green sloping area was to be an exterior domed portico adjacent to the main façade, which, had it been built, would have enriched the transition to the interior. After the entrance one finds a small vestibule. A narrow transversal corridor (parallel to the façade) gives access to the rooms and *iwans* on the façade side and to the stairs leading to the upper floor level reserved to the sultan. Another narrow corridor develops along the longitudinal axis leading to the central hall, in the center of which is the pool. This space acts as the hub of the mosque, the lateral rooms and *iwans* relating differently with it according to their functional purposes. The space further extends to the elevated prayer hall, widely open to the central space, with the *mihrab* on axis. The symmetrical development along the longitudinal axis and the stairs leading to the prayer room define an elaborated ascending path towards the *mihrab*. Simultaneously, the pool and lantern of the main dome mark the *axis mundi*—reflecting the pre-Islamic legacy (fig. 248, 249).

The rhythmic progression along this longitudinal movement is imparted by the light and scale contrast of the sequential spaces. The small vestibule receives a diffused light from the entrance, fading along the narrow entry way. The large central hall is lit through small windows pierced into the drum of the dome and by the lantern on its top. Its dim space receives additional filtered light from the side *iwans*, lit from above



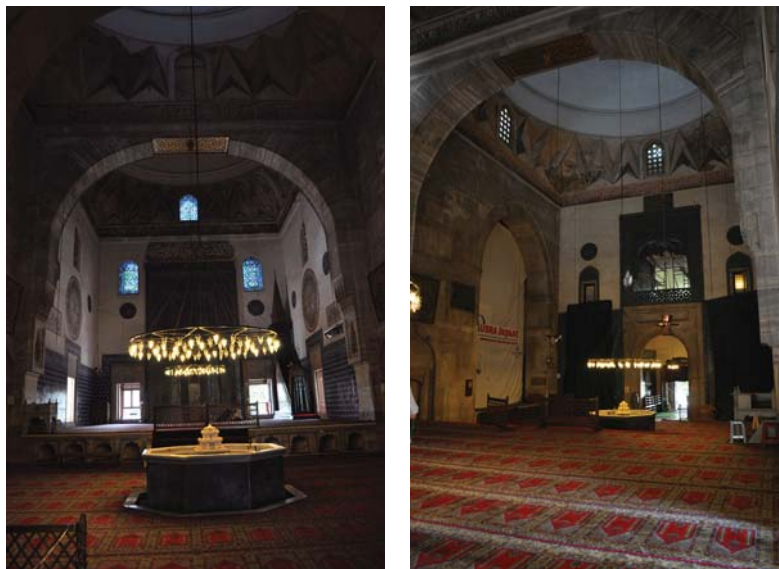


FIG. 248 Bursa. Green Mosque. Central hall and entry corridor seen from the prayer hall—*eyvans* hidden due to restoration works.

FIG. 249 Bursa. Green Mosque. Central hall and prayer hall.

and through windows on the exterior wall. The light sources of the central hall are thus exceptionally balanced. In the prayer hall, the lower level is strongly lit by the external walls' windows. Although lit from above by the drum's windows, the lack of a central lantern results in a gradual dimness along the vertical axis. Also, the upper windows pierced into the walls are in stained glass, reducing the light that passes through them and giving it a warm tone. While the two main domes are equal in height, the dimness of the prayer hall's dome and the raised floor convey the centrality of the preceding space. In sum, the Green mosque reflects the unresolved conflict between the dominance of the prayer hall in the Islamic model and that of the central space in the pre-Islamic conception of the universe.

**AESTHETIC AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE** Jeanneret's lifelong enthusiasm for the Green mosque is well known and dates back to his 1911 visit. Seemingly reflecting Corroyer's discourse, he wrote to his parents: "Vu la mosquée verte. Admirable : une intrusion d'un coup en Inde et en Perse."<sup>64</sup> The several drawings in his sketchbook, with notes on the details and decoration, show that his concern goes to the inner volumetric play and the way it is experienced.

A first sketch of the floor plan synthesizes the compositional principle based on the association of simple cubic volumes opening to the central space (fig. 250). A hatch registers the differences of light emphasizing the centrality of the first main dome. The lateral rooms next to the side *iwans* are not drawn, for they scarcely participate in the main space. The following page is a sketchy elevation of the prayer room seen from

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<sup>64</sup> Jeanneret to Parents, 19 August, 1911, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:386.



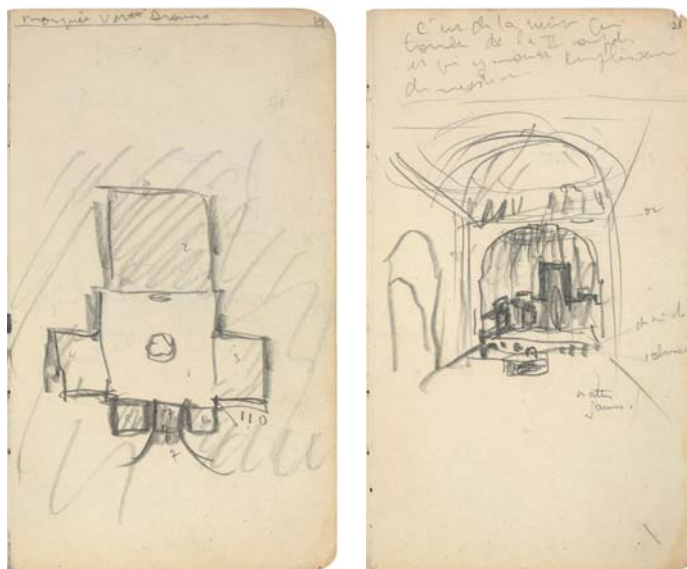


FIG. 250 Jeanneret. Bursa. Green Mosque. Plan.

FIG. 251 Jeanneret. Bursa. Green Mosque. Central hall seen from the prayer hall.

the central hall (*VdO Carnets*, 3:20). Some notes show his interest in the difference between the floor levels and the vertical development of space. Special attention is paid to the lantern and pool defining the vertical axis. The perspective that follows remains focused on the axial relationship between the two main spaces (fig. 251). The left *iwān* is barely represented and the one to the right is completely absent, seemingly reflecting his attention to the longitudinal axis, which, after Istanbul, informed the reading of the Ulu Camii. The prayer hall is shown in shadow emphasizing the dominance of the central hall, an observation further registered in the note: “C’est de la nuit qui tombe de la II coupole, et qui y monte emplissant de mystère.”

The most remarkable drawing is the cross-section, next to which the floor plan is more carefully drawn (fig. 252). Both relate to the overall character of the space, the ornamental details and materials used, taking into account the relationship between rooms and the location of the light sources. In the cross-section, Jeanneret indicates the portico preceding the entry, which was not built, suggesting his attention to its role in the sequential progress of the access. The lateral *iwān* is drawn in shadow, acknowledging its secondary position. The lantern on top of the central dome and the pool below are also present, marking the vertical axis. An annotation informs us once more about his concern with the difference of the floor level between the central hall and the prayer room. Finally, the light contrast between the lower and the upper areas of the prayer room is registered by a hatch, accusing the progressive dimness along the vertical development of the final space. As for the plan, accent is put on some of the peripheral walls, emphasizing the central space and the different ways the ancillary rooms open onto it, mainly the narrow access, the prayer hall, and the side *iwāns*.

In his quest to understand the Green mosque, Jeanneret’s sketches reflect the spatial problems involved in the typological evolution of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-

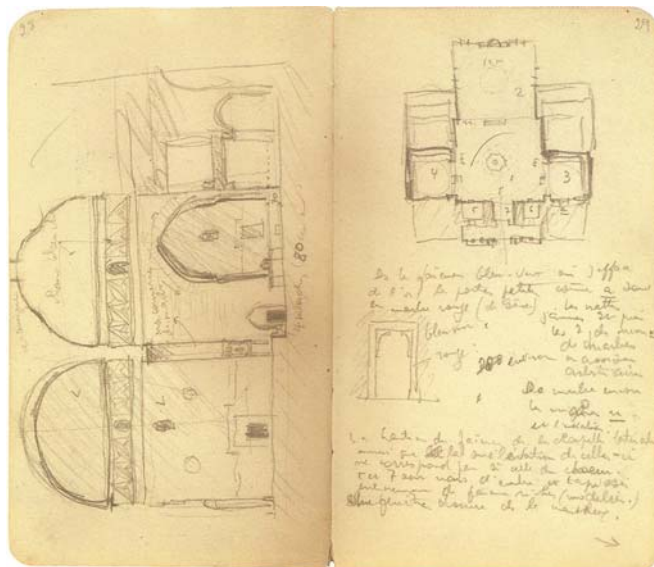


FIG. 252 Jeanneret. Bursa. Green Mosque. Cross-section and plan.

century mosques of Istanbul, that is, the quest for a central space expanded to the sides while maintaining the importance of Mecca's direction. In the Green Mosque, the unity of the space coexists with the individuality of the parts. The variety within unity is here achieved through the assembling of simple cubic forms, submitted to a longitudinal axis—the driving intention. A scribble in the last page of the sketchbook dedicated to the building summarizes Jeanneret's attention to the unity of form and accord of volumes: "une entente des volumes admirable ... ce n'est qu'un bloc."<sup>65</sup> It is clear that Jeanneret uses here the term "volume" to refer to the category of architectural space-form and the notion of rhythm associated with it. There is not a single drawing of the exterior, indicating that, rather than being concerned with the outer volumes and their correspondence with the inner space, he is clearly focused on the cubic forms of space and the way they relate to each other. His attention goes to the spatial unity composed of various smaller spaces and the hierarchical dominance of the central space. And this is evaluated from the experiential standpoint, associated with the transition between two distinct phenomenological worlds. Le Corbusier's later assessments shed light on Jeanneret's 1911 interpretation:

"A Brousse, en Asie Mineure, à LA MOSQUÉE VERTE, on entre par une petite porte à l'échelle humaine ; un tout petit vestibule opère en vous le changement d'échelle qu'il faut pour apprécier, après les dimensions de la rue et du site d'où vous venez, les dimension dont on entend vous impressionner. Alors vous ressentez la grandeur de la Mosquée et vos yeux mesurent. Vous êtes dans un grand espace blanc de marbre, inondé de lumière. Au-delà se présente un second espace semblable et de Mêmes dimensions, plein de pé-

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65 "il y a def [?] ici une entente des volumes admirable. Et 1 unité de matériaux et des formes! Ce n'est qu'un bloc." *VdO Carnets*, 3:32.

nombre et surélevé de quelques marches (répétition en mineur) ; de chaque côté, deux espaces de pénombre encore plus petits ; vous vous retournez, deux espaces d'ombre tout petits. De la pleine lumière à l'ombre, un rythme. Des portes minuscules et des baies très vastes. Vous êtes pris, vous avez perdu le sens de l'échelle commune. Vous êtes assujéti par un rythme sensoriel (la lumière et le volume) et par des mesures habiles, à un monde en soi qui vous dit ce qu'il a tenu à vous dire. Quelle émotion, quelle foi? Ça, c'est l'intention motrice. Le faisceau d'idées, ce sont les moyens qu'on a employés. Conséquences : à Brousse comme à Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople, l'extérieur résulte."<sup>66</sup>

In *Précisions*, he reinforces the idea of the play between volumes, light, and the transition between distinct phenomenological worlds:

“Je dessine un bonhomme. Je le fais entrer dans la maison ; il découvre telle grandeur, telle forme de pièce et surtout tel afflux de lumière par la fenêtre ou le pan de verre. Il avance: autre volume, autre arrivée de lumière. Plus loin, autre source lumineuse; plus loin encore, inondation de lumière et pénombre tout à côté, etc. Ces volumes successifs éclairés diversement, *on les respire* : le souffle en est actionné. J'ai toujours aimé citer la coupe de la Mosquée Verte de Brousse qui est un chef-d'œuvre de rythme par le volume et par la lumière.”<sup>67</sup>

In comparing Le Corbusier's later words with Jeanneret's earlier drawings of the mosque, it may be argued that they entail the same essential interpretation. At the formal level, the crux of the problem remains the assembling of simple cubic forms submitted to a driving intention, in which “volume” primarily relates to space-form, reflecting Le Corbusier's long life commitment to an architecture conceived as an organism—from the inside out. This principle goes back to his early education. But whereas in La Chaux-de-Fonds it was conceptualized by analogy with the proceedings of nature, now it is conceptualized in terms of abstract form—an attitude that we have already seen in Jeanneret's interpretation of the Süleymaniye mosque. At the experiential level, there is also no doubt that, both in Jeanneret and Le Corbusier, form is thought of from the standpoint of an actively engaged beholder.

Two fundamental steps preside over the experience of the Green mosque in this respect. The first one consists in the transition between two distinct phenomenological worlds, involving a temporal ordering of events along the access to the building (*on entre par une petite porte à l'échelle humaine ; un tout petit vestibule opère en vous le changement d'échelle ...*). In Jeanneret's drawings, this is expressed by the attention

<sup>66</sup> Le Corbusier-Saugnier, “L'illusion des plans,” 1769-1770. This article is illustrated with the plan of the Green Mosque and a perspective of Hagia Sophia, both from his sketchbooks. In the following year, Le Corbusier incorporated this article in *Vers une architecture* adding a perspective of the Süleymaniye Camii and changing the last sentence: “Conséquences : à Brousse comme à Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople, comme à Sulémanié de Stamboul, l'extérieur résulte.” Le Corbusier, *Vers une achitecture*, 146-147.

<sup>67</sup> Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, 132.

to the light and scale contrasts of the small vestibule and the depth of the dim entry passage, understood as a preparatory route which reinforces the intimacy of the large main hall. It is a transitional device which we need in order to be lifted above daily concerns and have a deep spiritual experience. The second step relates to the ensuing aesthetic enjoyment of the play of volumes brought together in light from a stationary viewpoint, as the eye and the head move around (*Alors vous ressentez la grandeur de la Mosquée et vos yeux mesurent ...*). Here, form needs no justification outside itself, it is understood in abstract terms, independent of meaning or ritual function, and experienced as a sensory rhythmic unity (*rythme sensorial*) composed by scale and light contrasts and skillful measures. It is an autonomous world (*un monde en soi qui vous dit ce qu'il a tenu à vous dire*). And yet, form is submitted to a meaningful driving intention of spiritual nature (*Quelle émotion, quelle foi? Ça, c'est l'intention motrice*). In the Green mosque, Jeanneret was thus starting to articulate the relationship between spiritual experience and aesthetic experience.

To draw this discussion together, the Classical mosques of Istanbul sensitized Jeanneret to the larger symbolic implications that could be attached to the experiential dimension of architecture. And this is associated to the notion of type, as indicated by the account of the Süleymaniye mosque in the *Feuille d'avis*. Through Schur's image of the sphinx, he could conceive architecture as the arrangement of geometric forms submitted to a vertical and a horizontal axis, and identify an experiential pattern established by the rite of moving through the building. This pattern could solve his conflicted feelings about Hagia Sophia; and it was certainly enriched by the numerous adaptations of the Ottoman type, of which the Rûsten Pasa Camii provides a particular interesting example.

This was, in turn, instrumental in his interpretation of the two older Ottoman typologies, the modular mosques and the *zawiya* double-centered mosques. After Istanbul, he could look at the neutral, formal simplicity of modular mosques like Ulu Camii in Bursa—their space defined by a central cosmic axis and the rhythmic grid, with the freestanding objects providing ritual referent—and read them in terms of an axial direction *brought into collision* with the meandering ritual path. In the typology of the *zawiya* or double-centered mosque—the Green mosque—it is the same fundamental balance between vertical and horizontal axis that governs his interpretation. Here, however, the symbolic journey is imparted by the rhythm of assembled cubic forms submitted to a driving intention: a single “block” implying the transition to an autonomous phenomenological world gathering spiritual and aesthetic experience.

We can see echoes of these two typologies in Le Corbusier's later work, namely

in the Villa Savoye (vertical axis, regular envelope, grid, and internalized meandering path across free plan submitted to a horizontal axis) and in the Villa La Roche (assembled cubic forms—also informed by the House of the Tragic Poet to be discussed) respectively. Significantly, these are the two cases about which Le Corbusier used the term “promenade architecturale.”

#### TYPE, CITY, AND LANDSCAPE

Let us now focus on the larger implications of this interpretation of the Ottoman mosques. The image of the Egyptian sphinx entails a reductive translation of form into geometry—two meaningful ordering axes set upon the desert. The same goes to the pyramid, a vertical axis set against the horizontal plain. Both are therefore a synthesis of architecture and landscape. In the early-twentieth century, this image had become a common place in traveling literature. Loti, for instance, explores the tension between the verticality of the Egyptian sphinx and pyramids of Giza and the horizontal desert. Jeanneret had evoked this imagery in several occasions before, during, and after the stay in Istanbul, from Pressburg to Mount Athos, a pyramid rising above the horizontal sea (*C'est une pyramide grandiose dressée sur ce plat de l'eau*).<sup>68</sup> His sketches and writings express Jeanneret's effort to translate the city and the landscape into “large expressions,” to use his own terms.<sup>69</sup> The reductive process involved in this quest for essentials, extending back to his German studies of town planning, can be found in the Balkans, Edirne, Istanbul, Athos, Athens, and Rome. The complexity of Rome, for instance, prevented him from synthetically conceptualizing the city, explaining why he saw it as a city lacking a silhouette and thus without soul: “Rome n'a pas de silhouette, pas d'âme. Ô Stamboul ô Athènes!”<sup>70</sup> Without grasping a clear, synthetic form of the city and the landscape, he could not come to terms with his search for essentials and meaning. In Istanbul, the problem was how to synthesize the relationship between the Ottoman *sphinxes* (the mosques) and the complex landscape and cityscape.

The first Turkish example of this endeavor is Edirne. Probably having Ritter's depiction of the landscape of the Balkans in mind, Jeanneret paid special attention to the confrontation of the plain and the mountains in the background along the approach to the city. Edirne is described from a distance as a swelling on the vast plateau, resolved in a mosque's dome and its minarets, emphasizing the vertical thrust:

<sup>68</sup> See Loti, *La Mort de Philae*, 2-14; Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 34, 102-103, 126; *VdO Carnets*, 3:100. For Athos see, in addition, Jeanneret to Ritter, 10 September 1911.

<sup>69</sup> “Que le rythme agence déjà ces grands termes d'expressions !” Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 126.

<sup>70</sup> Jeanneret to Klipstein, November 1911, FLC E2(6) 132-133. Quoted in Gresleri, “À la Villa d'Hadrien,” 40. See also Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 15 October 1911, rep. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 86; Jeanneret to Ritter, 21 October 1911.



“Et Andrinople apparut dans l'éclat de la grande lumière de l'après-midi. Andrinople, c'est comme le soulèvement de ce vaste plateau, résolu en un dôme magnifique. Des minarets formidables qui dans l'éloignement sont fins comme des presles des marais, - exaltent et dirigent droitement en haut cette grande poussée.”<sup>71</sup>

In the sketchbook, Jeanneret returns to the profile of the city dominated by the mosque seen from the train:

“... au lever du soleil en quittant avec le train Andrinople, la silhouette est formidable de la ville et de la mosquée. C'est l'affirmation d'un généreux gonflement, d'un soulèvement, d'une poussée qu'exaltent et dirigent les 4 minarets. L'effet déjà avait été saisissant à l'arrivée.”<sup>72</sup>

Jeanneret is here referring to the Selimiye Camii, rising on a summit dominating the city. Like the Florentine dome, the mosque is described during the arrival and departure by train. It is the experience of the traveler that provides the synthesis—the vertical thrust set against the horizontal plain. Seen as an extension of nature, the city and the mosque acquire a singular quality—the *interest of a natural creation*—resolving the horizontal landscape in its pyramidal silhouette. This episode bridges between Florence and the Ville Contemporaine, conceived as a pyramidal silhouette emerging from a plain, all of them entailing a symbolic dimension and an unfolding experience. Later in 1912 he returned to this episode:

“... quand le train nous emporta vers les 4 ½ heures du matin on avait reconnu à cette tiare le droit souverain d'être l'inco[...] synthèse poétique de cette plaine jaune bordée de balkans bleus ... La civilisation va venir. Le Grec triomphera ... Et l'Asie, réceptacle giron et matrice de toute poésie, n'aura plus d'empire que sur nous, les inactifs qui la pleurerons. Le Gratte-ciel triomphera ...”<sup>73</sup>

In Istanbul, it has been noted, his sojourn was marked by the effort to comprehend the city and its architecture. The unity between architecture and landscape continued to inform his approach: he repeatedly referred to the mosques' domes as extensions of the hilltops; compared the Ottoman mosque with Schuré's Egyptian sphinx; and compared the vertical thrust of the Hagia Sophia's dome with “le sein fécond de la terre” (fig. 221, top).<sup>74</sup> In sum, Jeanneret sought a synthesis of the landscape, the

71 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 59-60.

72 *VdO Carnets* 2:58.

73 Jeanneret to Ritter, 17 September 1912.

74 This kind of metaphor is retaken in 1914 in the chapter on Mount Athos when, describing the interior space of the Byzantine churches, he called to Hagia Sophia's dome the *solemn bosom* (solemn giron). The concise model of Athos is described as “une formule lapidaire comparable au bourgeon de l'arbre qui, tout petit, avant les chaudes pluies du printemps, contient sous son bouclier reluisant et ferme, tous les trésors de l'été, la fleur, - de l'automne, le fruit, - et de l'hiver. La lente et obscure germination.” Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 140-142.

city, and its architecture, broadly informed by the Romantic view of architecture as embodying the divine immanence of nature—a synthetic reading of form and meaning.

Far from the diagrammatic profile of Edirne, the complexity of Istanbul and its geography would not make his endeavor an easy task, however.<sup>75</sup> It was nonetheless this comprehensive understanding that Jeanneret had sought when he strategically planned his arrival by boat. The approach from the sea should provide him with a panoramic experience of the unfolding city and landscape, such as described at length in the traveling literature of the Grand Tour:

“Or nous sommes venus par la mer, classiquement, pour voir se dérouler ces choses ... nous étions sur le pont, pleins d’attente, quand parurent les Sept Tours. Puis ce furent des petites mosquées, puis les grandes, et les ruines des palais de Byzance ; enfin Sainte-Sophie et le Sérail. Et nous entrâmes dans la Corne d’Or, entre Péra commandée par la Tour des Gênois, et Stamboul plantée de minarets, – chaque sur un mont, face à face – j’étais violemment ému, car j’étais venu pour adorer ces choses que je savais si belles.”<sup>76</sup>

As Jeanneret himself wrote, this enchanted view of Istanbul is not what he enjoyed on his arrival, although he seems to have experienced it later, during the sojourn.<sup>77</sup> Yet, even if considerably indebted to the traveling literature, this passage is not simple rhetoric. Further indications of Jeanneret’s attention to the relationship between architecture and geography can be found, for instance, in the description of the Hagia Sophia as it unfolds in its strategic location, emerging atop the first hill of the old Constantinople, dominating the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, Scutari, and the Golden Horn.<sup>78</sup> He calls it “Pegasus descended from heaven,” relating the mythological figure with the church at the summit of the strategic hill.<sup>79</sup> Then he comments on the

75 “... Stamboul, don’t j’avais tant espéré, n’avait livré son secret qu’après vingt jours de désir et de travail ...” Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 159. See also Jeanneret to Ritter, July 1911; Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 18 July 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 277-281.

76 Le Corbusier, *Le Voyage d’Orient*, 67-68. In a letter to Ritter Jeanneret reinforces the significance of the arrival by boat: “Nous sommes venus par Rodosto, afin d’entrer dans ces eaux que j’eusse adoré, par la mer, classiquement, majestueusement, pour embrasser le grandiose coup d’œil.” Jeanneret to Ritter, July 1911.

77 Despite the tone of the description, Jeanneret’s first feeling was one of disappointment. In a letter to L’Eplattenier he wrote: “Je suis arrivé hier par mer. Impression bizarre.” Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 6 July, 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L’Eplattenier*, 275-276. Klipstein is more explicit: “We had to suffer excruciating pains. After spending the night in a place full of bedbugs and unable to sleep at all for fever and pain, we had to board a small steamer at 5:00 a.m. only to be buffeted by a rainstorm during the four-hour ride to Constantinople: strangely enough, I did not get seasick. Everyone around me looked more miserable than can be imagined ... These days were not particularly amusing. Even one’s sense of humor was completely gone for several hours. And finally, the very thing for which we had undertaken this whole trip via the sea, the magnificent view of Constantinople from the water, also went wrong. It was all gray-on-gray, and we are extremely disappointed about that to this day. There is much too much talk about the beauty of Stamboul. One arrives with too great expectations and then one is naturally disappointed.” Klipstein, ms., quoted in Vogt, “Reversed Grand Tour,” 45. As Vogt has pointed out, they nevertheless treated themselves to other boat rides on the Marmara, providing them with the view over the city from the sea.

78 “... cette colline qui fait proue dans la mer et ouvre le flot devant Stamboul.” Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 66.

79 Ibid., 102.

unity between the sea, the landscape, and the city. He sees Pera, Istanbul and Scutary complementing each other due to their dissimilar characters, constituting a *majestic unity*, a *trinity*.<sup>80</sup>

Passanti has shown that Jeanneret's comments on the unity of this *trinity*, read as three complementary parts with different uniform characters, resonates with the notion of "guiding intention" underlying Laugier's precept "order in the detail, tumult in the ensemble," anticipating the aesthetic appeal of the different functional areas that, juxtaposed, form the "larger drama" of the *Ville Contemporaine*.<sup>81</sup> I would like to expand this by focusing on old Istanbul and its mosques.

Old Istanbul started with the occupation of the extremity of the peninsula facing the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara. The Hagia Sophia rests upon this promontory. The Ottoman city extended westwards along the peninsula's ridge and its slopes. A series of perpendicular hills develop to the north, facing the Golden Horn and Pera. Following the Hagia Sophia in the first hill, the main Ottoman mosques are strategically arranged upon these hills (fig. 253). The approach from the Sea of Marmara exposes the promontory occupied by old Istanbul, dominated by the Hagia Sophia. Jeanneret described this strategic location; and from his room in Pera he had a panoramic view over the northern waterfront, the sequence of hills, and the mosques.<sup>82</sup>

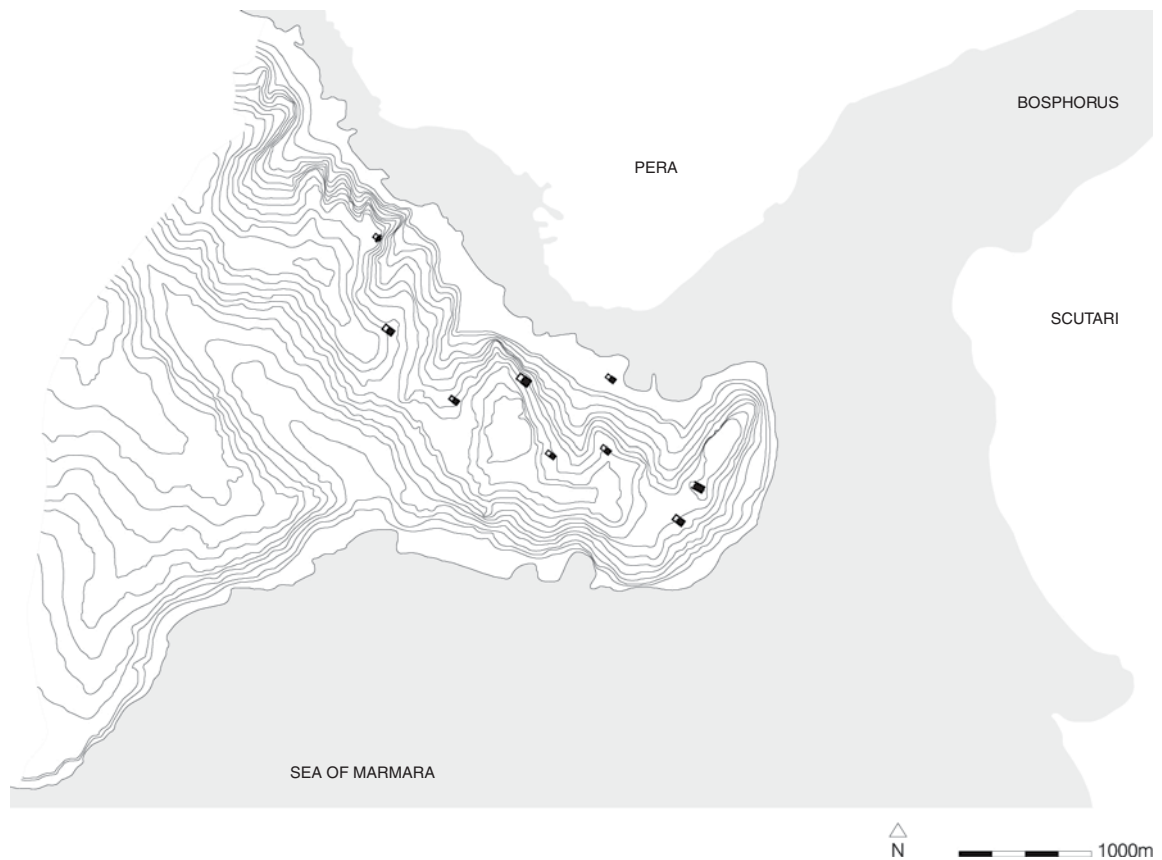
This panoramic view from Pera clarifies Jeanneret's comments about the way the Ottoman mosques extend the hilltops of old Istanbul. Several drawings and watercolors, some made during boat rides, show his endeavor to understand the profile of the city from several vantage points and synthesize the unity between architecture, landscape and seascape (fig. 254, 255). Esra Akcan has shown that, rather than portraying real views, some of these sketches incorporate the boat's motion by gathering several vantage points, combining views impossible from a single point.<sup>83</sup> Not that he sought to incorporate motion in the representation; like in Edirne, the traveler experience is here a means to synthesize reality.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 68. Istanbul—which Jeanneret refers to as the old part of the city—Pera, and Scutari are the three areas of Istanbul united by the sea. An inlet extending from the Bosphorus gives shape to the Golden Horn and divides the European side into two, the old Istanbul to the south and Pera to the north. Scutari, or Usküdar, is in the Asian shore of the Bosphorus (fig. 253).

<sup>81</sup> Passanti, "Aesthetic Dimension," 31-33.

<sup>82</sup> "Nous avons loué au bout du Petit champ des morts, à Péra, une chambre au troisième étage ... Trois grandes fenêtres donnant sur les cyprès et puis la Corne d'or et ensuite Stamboul [qu'hérissait] quelques mosquées." Le Corbusier to parents, 23 July 1911, repr. in *Correspondance*, 1:380-381. See also Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 18 July, 1911, repr. in *Lettres à L'Eplattenier*, 278. Klipstein's journal is more descriptive: "... we have a great place to stay, with a magnificent view of the Golden Horn, Stamboul and the Aya Sofia, Sultan Ahmet, Sultan Suleiman, Sultan Mehmed, and a great many small mosques. Farther beyond one sees the Marmara Sea as a narrow stripe, and on the horizon the huge wall of the Asian mountains with the snow-capped peak of Mt. Olympus (Uludag). A bit too much in the way of panorama—but this is what constitutes the much-praised beauty of Constantinople." Klipstein, ms., quoted in Vogt, "Reversed Grand Tour," 46.

<sup>83</sup> Esra Akcan, "L'héritage des photographies panoramiques d'Istanbul," in *L'Invention d'un architecte*, 241-255.



From right to left and from bottom to top: Hagia Sophia; Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque); Nuruosmaniye Camii; Yeni Camii; Bayezid Camii; Süleymaniye Camii; Sehzade Camii; Fatih Camii; Sultan Selim I Camii

**FIG. 253** Peninsula of Istanbul.

Topographic plan with Hagia Sophia and the main classical mosques arranged upon the northern hills facing Pera.

His interpretation becomes explicit in his words. In describing his departure from Istanbul, he talks of the city as a homogeneous mass of dark wooden houses punctuated by the several main mosques at the top of the hills, forming a unity facing the horizontal sea. Jeanneret sees three main elements: the stone dwellings of Allah, with their domes and minarets thrusting upwards; the wooden dwellings of the mortals with flattened roofs covered with tiles; and the greenery of the cemeteries and courtyards punctuating the cityscape with vertical cypresses. This schematic reduction is broadly present throughout the entire chapter on Istanbul.<sup>84</sup> “Mes yeux ont compris,” he writes when describing the main mosques punctuating the landscape, “je ne pense jamais revoir une telle Unité !”<sup>85</sup>

The presence of the several mosques aligned with Mecca, rising from the wooden mass of houses and contrasting in scale, form, color, material and orientation, is still easily felt today, and was certainly even more so at the beginning of the century. It is perceived at a distance, but also as one walks across the city. The self-referential

<sup>84</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 105-106, 65-75; *VdO Carnets*, 2:78.

<sup>85</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 102-106.



FIG. 254 Jeanneret. Istanbul, 1911.

FIG. 255 Jeanneret. Istanbul, 1911. (*VdO Carnets*, 3:37)

autonomy of the mosques is evident in the majority of the cases due to their independence from the organic urban fabric, not only because they follow a fixed axis, but also because they are disconnected from the city's slopes, thanks to the horizontal terraces upon which they often rest. From a distance, for example from Pera, the houses and greenery form a homogeneous mass adapted to the topography, whereas the mosques emerging from this mass in their vertical thrust and common direction superimpose a clear, distinct order to the urban fabric, extending the hilltops. They establish a guiding intention, articulating the relationship between the city of the mortals and the numinous landscape.

The overpowering drama of this unison of action is seen by Jeanneret as something more than a formal structuring principle. Seen from afar, the axes defined by the mosques are a sign of the Turkish soul and faith: "Une géométrie discipline les masses: le carré, le cube, la sphère," he writes, "en plan c'est un complexe rectangulaire dont l'axe est unique. Le rayonnement des axes de toutes les mosquées sur terre musulmane, vers la pierre noir de la Kaabâ, est un grandiose symbole de l'unité de la foi."<sup>86</sup> And

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 78.





256-257). Like the Ottoman mosque, this self-sufficient city within the city is a self-referential form detached from the urban fabric. Experienced from afar, the vertical impulse of its simple form defines a vertical axis, while its orientation directs each of the dwellings towards the rising sun, giving presence to the pantheistic realm of Nature. Through its cosmic and pantheistic axes, architecture complements nature and mediates between man and the landscape, experienced from afar as well as from within.

### GREECE: ARCHETYPAL EXPERIENCE

Jeanneret left Istanbul by boat and arrived at Mount Athos late in August. In September he continued to Athens, the most important visit for our purposes. For the sake of brevity I will not dwell on the visit to Athos except to briefly note how his interests remained unchanged: like in Turkey, and as mentioned above, he sought to synthesize landscape and architecture, sketching Athos's pyramidal silhouette emerging from the horizontal sea—an elementary composition of horizontal and vertical absolutes drawn along the approach by boat; particular attention was given to the cubic masses of the monasteries, also drawn from the sea, “sitting like eagles' eyries at the top of steep, inaccessible rocks,” while writing on the experience of their cells on the upper floors overlooking the endless sea; lastly, the Byzantine churches, drawn and described in a retrospective essay, emphasizing the sequential spaces and Byzantine typological features, and domes extending the hills.<sup>88</sup>

Jeanneret arrived in Athens on September 12. He mainly devoted his stay to the Acropolis. The significance of the Acropolis and the influence that the Parthenon—seen as an aesthetic icon—exerted on Le Corbusier have been discussed at length in the literature. During his lifetime he recurrently evoked both the building and the site in his writings and architectural work. Our concern, here, is to understand how he experienced the Attic landscape and the Acropolis in 1911, and how this experience was built upon the preceding traveling experiences and the influence of men like Ritter, Baud-Bovy, or Boissonnas. Before that, it is useful to briefly survey the literature Jeanneret was acquainted with.

<sup>88</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 131-33, 139-142; *VdO Carnets*, 3:47, 49, 57, 65-67, 77. On the monasteries see also Zaknic, “Le Corbusier's Epiphany on Mount Athos,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 27-36.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE The nineteenth-century literature on classical architecture broadly follows two main veins. The first takes a positivist approach to the archaeological finds, and is mainly concerned with the buildings, their structural principles, composition, proportions, ornament, and so forth. Since his collaboration with Perret, Jeanneret was well acquainted with the interdependence between architectural conception and structural system. At that time, he had devoted part of his daily life to reading, and had attended Lucien Magne's classes on Gothic architecture and Italian Renaissance at the Beaux-Arts. He had bought Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire*, and it is reasonable to assume that he had read books such as Magne's *Le Parthénon*, which presents a report on the ruins and an architectural analysis of the building system, architectural composition, and decoration.<sup>89</sup> Seen as the Classical aesthetic icon, the Parthenon is presented by Magne as summarizing the perfection of art in antiquity and as a product of reason. The second vein of this literature combines a positivist and a Romantic approach, and the relationship between architecture and landscape occupies a central place in it. The consideration of the site ultimately harks back to Jean-Nicolas Huyot's fundamental shift from an architectural archeology focused on the value of monumental buildings (shape, arrangement, ornament, and so forth) towards the consideration of its integration in the city and natural environment. Several notions merge in the tradition started by Huyot, from the idea that architecture is an extension of nature to that which saw the ruins as the skeleton of an ideal communal life with close connections with its ideal landscape.<sup>90</sup> The combination of this larger view of ancient architecture with the positivist approach was available to Jeanneret through various authors, such as Blanc, Émile Boutmy, or Maxime Collignon, whose books Jeanneret possessed or could find in the library of the School of Arts or in public libraries like the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.<sup>91</sup>

Both veins had to deal with archaeological discoveries, which led to the revision of eighteenth-century Beaux-Arts preconceptions on classical design, with two main consequences. One was to show that Vitruvius's ideas about the orientation of Greek temples were wrong and that, rather than being ruled by abstract laws, Greek architecture had developed in close connection with geographic specificities. Jean-

<sup>89</sup> Lucien Magne, *Le Parthénon: études faites au cours de deux missions en Grèce 1894-1895* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1895).

<sup>90</sup> On Huyot's broader consideration of Classical architecture and its influence in Schinkel see van Zanten, "The Harmony of Landscape, Architecture, and Community: Schinkel's Encounter with Huyot, 1826," in *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, 1781-1841. The Drama of Architecture*, ed. John Zukowsky (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth and Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1994), 84-96. I thank Francesco Passanti for having called my attention to van Zanten's essay.

<sup>91</sup> Blanc, *Grammaire*; Émile Boutmy, *Le Parthénon et le génie grec* (Paris: Armand Colin & Cie, Éditeurs, 1897), originally published as *Philosophie de l'architecture en Grèce*, 1870; Maxime Collignon, *L'Archéologie grecque* (Paris: Librairie d'Éducation Nationale, Alcide Picard Éditeur, 1897), 75-76. See no. 43 and 69 in the catalogue of the art school. For Jeanneret's personal library see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 233-243.

neret became acquainted with this view at an early stage of his education. Blanc, for instance, discusses the arrangement of Greek temples stressing how the Greeks excelled in choosing sites for their monuments: “D’autres conditions sont nécessaires à la beauté des trois ordres: Le choix du site, l’assiette et l’orientation du monument, et son harmonie avec la nature environnante.”<sup>92</sup> The relationship between the temples and nature is discussed in terms of how they are to be seen by sailors, on the top of a promontory with their “calm horizontal lines dominating the irregular cliffs of a mountain and the wavy sea,” and in terms of the view which is offered from them, dominating the surrounding mountains, the valleys and the sea.

The other consequence of archaeological discoveries, such as those in the Acropolis, was the narrowing of the gap between the Positivist and the Romantic approaches. In accepting the archaeological evidence, the positivist vein was forced to deal with the subjective factor of the senses, since the intentional distortion of the geometric and mathematic principles observed in the ruins was understood as a device to convey an ideal form to the perceiver.<sup>93</sup> The discourse on ideal form had to shift from the geometric rigor to the faculties of perception, and it expanded to include aesthetics, optics and psychology. With this inflection, man was brought to the center of the debate, just as in the theories of the picturesque and of *Einfühlung*, involving the subjective factor of the aesthetic emotions sparked by the building and site. This pervaded architectural and traveling literature in general.<sup>94</sup> The most paradigmatic example of this interaction between positivism and Romanticism is perhaps Choisy’s conception of the Athenian Acropolis as a sequence of unfolding *tableaux*.

By the end of the century, the consideration of site specificity and subjective aesthetic perception was fully integrated in the debate on classical architecture. For example, Boutmy writes:

“Les architectes grecs ... n’ont pas ignoré que la grammaire n’est pas tout ; que les grands effets naissent d’une expression individuelle et spéciale, créée sur place par une émotion intense ; que, bien loin de dépendre de la règle inférieure qui gouverne les rapports généraux et extérieurs de la forme avec les exigences des sens, ils sont souvent dus à une violation locale et justifiée de cette règle.”<sup>95</sup>

Further on he adds:

<sup>92</sup> Blanc, *Grammaire*, 241-243. Note the similarity with Jeanneret words on the Parthenon “lorsqu’il surgit de son assiette de pierre.” Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 159.

<sup>93</sup> For a synthetic survey of the nineteenth-century archaeological discoveries on the Periclean Acropolis see Etlin, “Le Corbusier, Choisy, and French Hellenism”; Lucan, *Composition, Non-composition*, 349-359.

<sup>94</sup> See, for instance, Théophile Gautier, *Loin de Paris* (Paris : Michel Lévy Frères, 1865), 231-235. Without referring specifically to this book, Gautier is mentioned in *Voyage d’Orient*, 120. On Jeanneret’s acquaintance with Gautier’s work see also Bozdoğan, “Entre orientalisme,” 220-227.

<sup>95</sup> Boutmy, *Le Parthénon*, 165. Jeanneret could find this book in the library of the art school (no. 43 in the catalogue).

“Le temple de Pallas Athéné n'est pas un édifice abstrait qui se dessine sur un ciel quelconque et pose sur un sol sans nom; il s'élève sur un sol réel dans un pays déterminé ... Plusieurs des formes de sa construction, les reliefs, les profils, certains motifs de décoration, sont visiblement commandés par les conditions et les caractères du milieu physique : la nature des matériaux, la sécheresse et la pureté de l'air, la qualité de la lumière, de l'ombre et de la couleur, le dessin et, en quelque sorte, le modelé de la nature environnante ; le monument s'insère entre les lignes du paysage, il étudie à en imiter, à en continuer l'harmonie.”<sup>96</sup>

In some cases, the emphasis on the subjective experience of both architecture and site surpasses the architectural facts. The art historian and archaeologist Maxime Collignon writes:

“Voilà ce que j'avais appris en lisant de doctes ouvrages ... Je savais à peu près ce que pensaient les archéologues sur le célèbre monument. Penrose m'avait appris que Phidias, par un artifice de construction, avait donné une légère convexité aux lignes horizontales du soubassement et de l'entablement pour corriger la déformation produite chez celles-ci par l'erreur d'optique commune. D'autres auteurs, Gustave Fougères entre autres, m'avaient expliqué pourquoi les axes verticaux des colonnes étaient inclinés vers l'intérieur afin d'empêcher la divergence apparente qui se produit dans le champ de la vision quand nous regardons des lignes verticales isolées dans le vide. Boutmy m'avait fait comprendre la logique supérieure de ce monument 'où il y a autant de syllogismes que de quartiers de marbre.’

Et certes, j'étais très satisfait de tout ce savoir livresque que je venais d'acquérir. Assurément l'archéologie est une science fort intéressante ; nulle part plus qu'en Grèce on n'en comprend le prix. Elle ne prédispose cependant pas à l'enthousiasme et, si l'on veut être monté à un certain diapason, il vaut mieux lire Renan et la Prière sur l'Acropole. Pour tout dire, j'étais un peu refroidi quand je me rendis au Parthénon ... Force m'est d'avouer que toutes mes prévisions furent trompées, je fus remué en effet par l'émotion esthétique la plus intense quand je vis se dresser devant moi la ruine incomparable.”<sup>97</sup>

That this aesthetic emotion is sparked by the conjunction of architectural factors and the site's specificity is stressed by Collignon himself:

“A quoi tient l'incomparable splendeur de ce monument unique ? ... La proportion merveilleuse des lignes, l'harmonie respective des détails et des rapports sont évidemment la

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 294-295.

<sup>97</sup> Collignon, *L'Archéologie grecque*, 75-76. Ernest Renan, *Prière sur l'Acropole* (Paris: Édouard Pelletan Éditeur, 1899), is a Romantic text about the Acropolis depicting the author's personal revelation of his visit, extolling its relationship with the landscape. Jeanneret was aware of these authors. For Collignon's book see no. 69 in the catalogue of the art school. As for Renan's, it is mentioned in a letter to Ritter. Soliciting his advice on what he should read in order to prepare the itinerary of the journey—the *indispensable initiators*—he specifically asked where he could find Renan's *Prière sur l'Acropole*, possibly influenced by Collignon. Jeanneret to Ritter, 1 Mars 1911. Renan's book has been pointed out by several authors as sharing Jeanneret's idealism and as reinforcing his idealist approach to the Acropolis. Turner was the first to mention Renan and to see a close connection in the way both authors describe the Parthenon as perfectly embodying the “absolute.” Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 98-100.



première cause ... Mais l'impression tient à d'autres causes, entre autres à la remarquable adaptation du monument au socle naturel qui lui sert de base ; le Parthénon a été fait pour l'Acropole ; partout ailleurs il perdrait de son admirable eurhythmie plastique. Il a le cadre qu'il lui faut."<sup>98</sup>

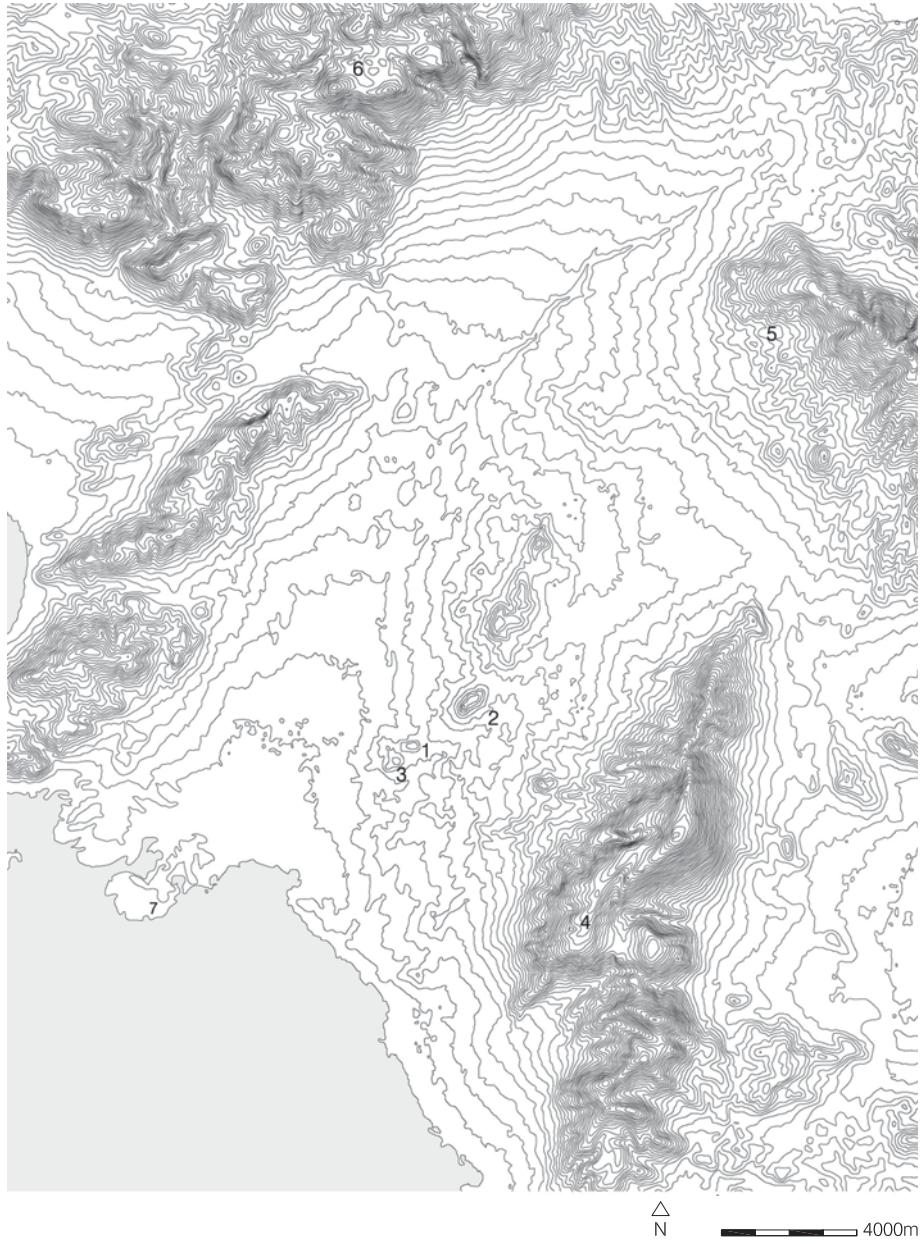
The attention to landscape and subjective perception, which we find in authors like Blanc, Collignon, Choisy and Boutmy, is the central topic in authors familiar to Jeanneret that we have already discussed in earlier chapters. Two fundamental contributions for Jeanneret must be recalled. From Baud-Bovy, Boissonnas, Vaillat, and Ritter, Jeanneret absorbed the notion of a comprehensive look upon the Parthenon, the Acropolis, and the Attic landscape, and the notion of an axial accordance between the natural and the manmade. Involving a sense of direction and, like in Semper and Baud-Bovy, the imagery of the ship, it expresses a three-step spatiotemporal experience—distant bird's eye view from another mountain, rhythmic ascent, and view over the landscape along the axis from the elevated plateau.<sup>99</sup> These readings, in turn, were overlaid upon Jeanneret's earlier acquaintance with Schuré, his similar account and his discourse on the ancient symbols of Egypt. Seen in the light of the Egyptian legacy, the Parthenon was, for Schuré, a sphinx, through which man connects with the grand Pan. Through these authors, I suggested, Jeanneret looked at the Acropolis as an archetypal lived experience of the natural and the manmade. His drawings and writings will corroborate this view. Through them, I will suggest that the comprehensive experiential dimension of the Acropolis was the crux of his 1911 visit.

**THE ARCHETYPAL EXPERIENCE** As noted before, the Acropolis rises upon the Attic plain framed by the bounding mountains of Hymettos, Pentelikon and Parnes (fig. 258). These mountains are perceived as forming a U-shape enclosing the city and cutting the view over the Greek land, directing it towards southwest, where the Gulf of Aegina separates the plain from the Peloponnesus. At the center of this U, and contrasting with its southwestern orientation, rises the hill of the Acropolis: it is long and narrow, and oriented east-west. The access is from the narrow western end, through steep ceremonial staircases ending in the Propylaea. On the platform of the Acropolis, the Parthenon is also oriented east-west. This geographic context is described by Jeanneret in the account of his arrival by boat:

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<sup>98</sup> Collignon, *L'Archéologie grecque*, 79. Note the similarity with Jeanneret's words: "Les temples son les raison de ce paysage." Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 153.

<sup>99</sup> On Semper's association between the imagery of the ship, the notion of "unity of purpose" and directional organization in architecture (involving the example of the Parthenon) see "Theoretical Frameworks," in chap. 1 of this work. For a similar association by Baud-Bovy see "Archetypal Narrative: The Acropolis," in chap. 4.



1. Acropolis; 2. Lycabettos; 3. Pnyx; 4. Hymettos; 5. Pentelikon; 6. Parnes; 7. Piraeus

FIG. 258 Athens. Topographic plan.

“La mer toujours présente, blême sous le midi, flambante au déclin du jour, sert de mesure à l’élévation des monts barrant l’horizon ; le paysage contracté ne bénéficie plus ainsi de l’espace infini qui adoucissait les images de l’Athos. L’Acropole – ce roc – surgit seule au cœur d’un cadre fermé. À peine sur la gauche au-delà du Pirée, lorsque du flot monte une fumée, sent-on que la pleine mer est là et que les flottes entrent. L’Hymette et le Pentélique, deux chaînes très hautes, deux grands écrans joutés, se placent à notre dos, orientant le regard à l’opposé, vers l’estuaire de pierre, de sable : le Pirée. L’Acropole, dont le sommet plat porte les temples, captive l’intérêt, comme la perle dans sa valve. On ne ramasse la valve que pour la perle. Les temples sont la raison de ce paysage ...

L’unité rouge du paysage s’est communiquée aux temples ... voici que se confirmèrent la rectitude des temples, la sauvagerie du site, leur structure impeccable. L’Esprit triomphe. L’entablement d’une cruelle rigidité écrase et terrorise. Le sentiment d’une fatalité extra-humaine vous saisit. Le Parthénon, terrible machine, broie et domine ... il impatronise son cube face à la mer ...”<sup>100</sup>

It is however his drawings and photographs that better express how this comprehensive geographic reading was interpreted both as a physical experience and a spiritual experience. These can be divided into three groups or themes, corresponding to a three-step experience.

A first set of drawings in the sketchbook (fig. 259-261) shows the distant view over the Acropolis from an elevated viewpoint at the Lycabettos, like that of the panoramic illustration of Athens published in the Baedeker guide.<sup>101</sup> Jeanneret thus first proceeded to an overall approach to the site and the relationship between architecture and the landscape. The approach was not new, as we have seen. To a certain extent, the strategic position of Hagia Sophia is similar to the elevated settlement of the Parthenon. At a distance, both the Parthenon and the basilica can be seen standing atop a hill, conceived as the extension of their vertical impulses. But whereas the outer composition of the Hagia Sophia is dominated by its vertical axis and the horizontal development is only perceived close up, the longitudinal development of the Parthenon—closer to the classical mosques of Istanbul—is clearly visible at a distance, mediating between the verticality of the hill and the direction imparted by the sea and enclosing mountains. Architecture and landscape attain a clear, concrete agreement, a unity resulting from the physical specificities of geography and the architectural response to it. Moreover, the abstract relationship of the Byzantine basilica with a vanishing point is here objectified in a concrete landscape.

Jeanneret’s sketches reveal his attention to this axial accordance. From the Lycabettos, he had the enclosing mountains behind himself, and was facing the Acropolis

<sup>100</sup> Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 153-154.

<sup>101</sup> *Baedeker: Grèce*, “Panorama d’Athènes,” 96-97. The guide advises a visit to the Lycabettos, the elevation at north-east of the Acropolis, showing a magnificent panoramic view of the Attic plain with the Acropolis, the surrounding mountains and the sea.

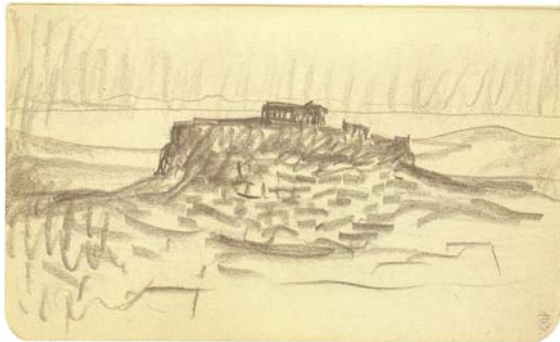


FIG. 259, 260, 261 Jeanneret. Athenian Acropolis seen from the Lycabettus.  
FIG. 262 Jeanneret. Athenian Acropolis seen from the Lycabettus.

soaring from the plain, with the Peloponnesus beyond (fig. 259, 260). Suppressing the details of the city, he focused on the east-west orientation of the Acropolis, with the horizontal sea and the far mountains. The same view is further explored in the last drawing of this set (fig. 261), probably drawn at dusk, when the silhouettes of Aegina, Salamis, and the Peloponnesus were fading in the dark sky.<sup>102</sup> A separate sheet reinforces Jeanneret's interest in the twilight changes (fig. 262).

In these monochrome sketches, the main issue seems to be the search for the essence of the relationship between the Acropolis and the landscape. Despite the painterly descriptions, Jeanneret repeatedly characterizes the Acropolis as monochromatic.<sup>103</sup> We are reminded of Blanc's discussion on the superiority of drawing over color. For him, drawing is essential, is absolute, because it defines the character, it is a project of the spirit. In contrast, color is relative and should be submitted to drawing. Discussing the arrangement of Greek architecture, Blanc explicitly argues that a monochrome monument expresses clearly its unity and that its essence can be even clearer at night when the moonlight suppresses the superfluous:

“Les monuments de l'architecture ne sont jamais plus imposants que dans les nuits claires, lorsque la lune les enveloppe de sa lumière mystérieuse, et, en les simplifiant, les idéalise. Cette poésie est due au triomphe de l'unité, de l'unité qui est le principe de toute grandeur...”<sup>104</sup>

Seen in Blanc's terms, the synthetic character of these drawings and the confrontation of the same views in different times of the day suggest Jeanneret's intention to apprehend essentials: the play between the vertical Acropolis, the horizontal sea, and the undulating mountains, the contrast between mass and void, the unity between architecture and landscape.

The second set of drawings in the sketchbook (fig. 263-267) seems to correspond to a single visit to the Acropolis and concerns the access to it, focusing on the Propylaea.<sup>105</sup> Jeanneret started with an architectural analysis of the building, drawing a plan (fig. 263). A loose sheet with the cross-section along its main axis can be found among his papers (fig. 264). The sketchbook drawings suggest that Jeanneret was analyzing the building as a threshold. Making no mention of style, proportions, measurements, or any other architectural detail, he drew a set of perspectives depict-

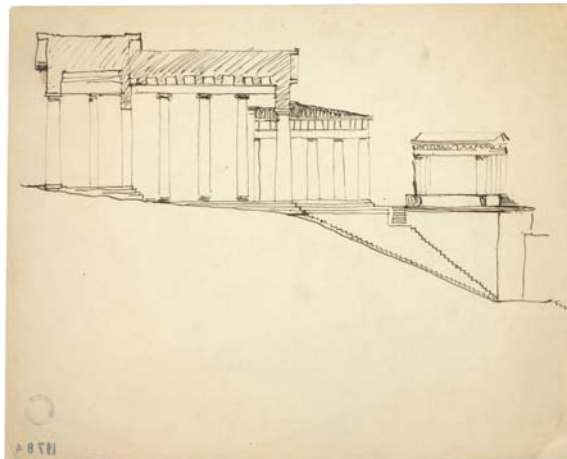
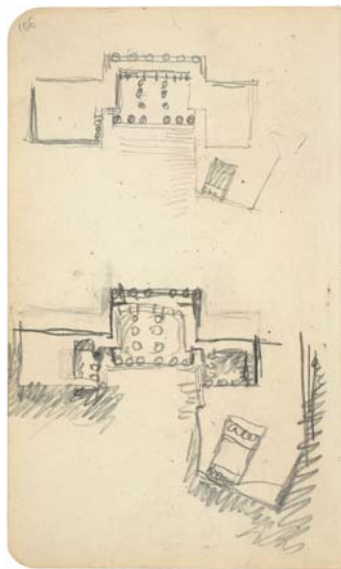
**102** On Jeanneret's mention to the Peloponnesian mountains disappearing in the shadow at dusk see Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 166. These three drawings may be read as a sequence in time from a stationary point of view, the far distant silhouettes gradually fading during the twilight. For a different reading of the direction of the last drawing cf. Gresleri, *Le Corbusier, VdO Carnets*, 121.

**103** *Ibid.*, 154, 163, 168.

**104** Blanc, *Grammaire*, 245-248.

**105** The sequence of the sketchbook suggests that the following drawings of the Acropolis were made in a different day and that this set corresponds to a single visit.





**FIG. 263** Jeanneret. Propylaia. Plan.

**FIG. 264** Jeanneret. Propylaia. Cross-section.

**FIG. 265** Jeanneret. Propylaia. Axial view on the approach.

**FIG. 266** Jeanneret. Temple of Wingless Victory and conic peak seen from the Propylaia.

**FIG. 267** Jeanneret. Parthenon seen from the Propylaia.



FIG. 268 Acropolis. Illustration by Marcel Lambert. From Boutmy, *Le Parthénon*.

FIG. 269 Locarno. Madonna del Sasso. Postcard from Jeanneret's collection.

ing the progression along the access. First, the axial approach to the asymmetrical balance of the building from the ascending access (fig. 265). Then, two perspectives preceding the entrance, one to the left side (*VdO Carnets*, 3:109) and another in the opposite direction showing the dramatic suspension of the cubic form of the temple of Wingless Victory projected towards the landscape (fig. 266). Resonating with Boissonnas, it focuses on the depth relationship between the building and the far distant sea and conic peak. In the following page he repeated this view suppressing the wall's base (*VdO Carnets*, 3:113). Lastly, he drew the instant at which the Parthenon emerges from the shadow of the Propylaia, seen at an angle and filtered by the columns in the foreground (fig. 267). Seen as a single set of drawings, the sequence is clear. It involves the problem of sequential views along the ascent and the transition towards the enclosed precinct.

The association of the Acropolis with an ascending experience is totally expectable; it was commonly explored in the literature, from Collignon, Boutmy, and Magne, to Sitte, Schuré or Baud-Bovy. Associated with the imagery of the Panathenaea procession, it also permeated some trends in contemporary art, such as Appia's theater sets. The degree to which this imagery was associated with the rhythmic unfolding of architecture surfaces in illustrations such as that of Marcel Lambert, published in Boutmy's book (fig. 268), or in descriptions such as those of the Baedeker.<sup>106</sup> And it was most probably the Acropolis that Jeanneret had in mind when, probably on the way back home at the end of the journey, he bought a postcard of the Madonna del Sasso, in Locarno, with the pilgrimage route and shrines (fig. 269).

106 Baedeker, *Grèce*, 40-50.

The third set concerns the drawings and photographs Jeanneret made from the interior of the precinct (fig. 270-276). These are characterized by two main aspects. First, they focus on the west landscape. Second, architecture is always present in the foreground, mediating between the beholder and the landscape. The last drawing of the sketchbook shows the Propylaia and the west landscape beyond (fig. 270). Another example is the photograph of the Erechtheion (fig. 271), including only part of the building and centered on a subtle double peak of the mountains' silhouette in the background. The main theme is therefore the relationship between the Acropolis's vacant space, the architectural forms, and the far landscape. A photograph showing the north-west corner of the Parthenon adopts the same compositional principle (fig. 272). Taken at a closer distance, the building fills a larger area of the frame, dramatizing its scale. In addition, the edge of the building is displaced to the center. Its unusual framing suggests, on one level, that Jeanneret was trying to portray the way the columnar rhythm directs the view towards the landscape, carrying our eyes westwards, where a mountain silhouette subtly emerges directly on axis, on the right side of the image. On another level, it suggests that Jeanneret judiciously positioned the camera in order to suppress the intervening plain and the Propylaia, to the right, isolating the temple and the mountain's silhouette in order to emphasize their relationship.<sup>107</sup>

This approach is further suggested by the watercolors later gathered in the series *Langage des pierres*, where the Parthenon acquires a main role in the axial articulation of the elevated plateau and the landscape.<sup>108</sup> One of the watercolors, painted from the south flank of the temple, shows the south-west corner of the Parthenon in the foreground with the sea and the silhouette of the mountains beyond, focusing on a

**107** The view, the steps, and the difference in level between the temple and the foreground terrain reveal that the photograph concerns the north façade and the west landscape. Le Corbusier published a similar view by Boissonas in *L'Esprit nouveau*. Clearly focusing on the relationship between the temple and the landscape, Boissonas displaces the temple to the left edge of the image, whereas Jeanneret's framing seems to intentionally implicate the columnar rhythm in this dialog. Another difference is that the foreground steps indicate that Boissonas's image portrays the west colonnade along the south direction. Below Boissonas' image Le Corbusier wrote: "On a dressé sur l'Acropole des temples qui sont d'une seule pensée et qui ont ramassé autour d'eux le paysage désolé et l'ont assujetti à la composition. Alors, de tous les bords de l'horizon, la pensée est unique." Le Corbusier-Saugnier "Architecture III, pure création de l'esprit," 103.

**108** Gresleri has suggested that these watercolors were expressly made for the exhibition held in Neuchâtel in April 1912, retaking motives drawn during the Athenian sojourn. They were among the 16 watercolors exposed in Neuchâtel in 1912, and among the 11 which were selected from the formers to be exposed in the Salon d'Automne in Paris in the following year. Based on their style and technique, Brooks has also suggested a post-Athenian date. Danielle Perret has argued that they are close to the work Jeanneret produced between 1912 and 1917, characterized as a sort of *Mediterranean expressionism*, "l'expression d'un monde reflétant une disposition intérieure personnelle et subjective, mais animé par des forces positives." Even if they postdate Jeanneret's visit, Jeanneret could hardly paint them without a careful observation *in situ*. For our purposes, the important thing to retain is that they reinforce the 1911 focus on the western direction of the Acropolis and the Parthenon. Gresleri, "Il poema orientale," in *Il linguaggio delle pietre*, 31, 39n56; idem., "Il Silenzio delle pietre, le parole dei numeri, la solitudine, il deflagrante ricordo," in Benedetto Gravagnuolo, ed., *Le Corbusier e l'antico: viaggi nel Mediterraneo* (Napoli, Electa Napoli, 1997), 82, 83n48; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 284n33; Danielle Perret, "Ch.-E. Jeanneret: dessins de Jeunesse," in *Le Corbusier: peintre avant le purisme*, ed. Edmond Charrière and Danielle Perret (Musée des Beaux-Arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1987), 21.





FIG. 270 Jeanneret. Propylaea seen from the interior of the precinct.

FIG. 271 Jeanneret. Erechtheion and double peak in the background, 1911.

FIG. 272 Jeanneret. Parthenon. North façade looking towards Salamis, 1911.

FIG. 273 Jeanneret. Parthenon. South flank looking towards Salamis.

FIG. 274 Acropolis. Double peak of Salamis on axis with the Propylaea. (by author)

FIG. 275 Jeanneret. Parthenon. North flank looking towards Salamis.

FIG. 276 Jeanneret. Parthenon. North flank looking towards Salamis.

breast-like double peak (fig. 273) This is the double peak of Salamis which defines the axis of the Periclean Propylaia (fig. 274).<sup>109</sup> The second watercolor exists in two versions (fig. 275, 276). The main difference between them lies precisely in the silhouette of the mountain in the background. One of the versions shows an undulating profile dominated by a central conic peak. In the second version this form presents a double conic peak. A visit to the Acropolis shows that the second silhouette is closer to reality and that it corresponds to the double peak of Salamis seen at the vanishing point of the north flank looking westwards. Seen together, the two points of view suggest that the Parthenon is on axis with the double peak of Salamis. Indeed, if one stands at the Parthenon's axis looking westwards, the double peak appears directly in front. In short, the three watercolors point in the direction of the main axis of the temple, emphasizing its directionality towards the west landscape, conveying the direction through the columnar rhythm.

Finally, one more watercolor shows an oblique view, once more towards the sea, framing a breast-like double peak silhouette between two columns of the west façade (fig. 277, 278).<sup>110</sup> Once more, Jeanneret was focusing on the relationship between the

**109** The seminal work concerning the relationship between classical architecture and the specificity of the sites remains Vincent Scully, *The Earth, the temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1962). Scully has shown how Mediterranean cultures developed their architecture in accordance to alignment principles with natural elements such as the mountain peaks or double peaks, which were seen as symbolic representations both of male and female deities, associated since Crete with the image of the horns of the sacred bull, with the dwelling of Zeus, or with the body of Gaia. In his discussion of the Acropolis, Scully has remarked that the direction of the old Propylaia had been changed by Mnesicles, who aligned its axis with the double peak on the highest point of Salamis. The Periclean Acropolis was arranged on a long axis running between the Erechtheion and the Parthenon, defined by the double peak of Salamis on the west and by the horn-like double peak of Hymettos on the east. From the Propylaia, the Periclean Parthenon appears to the view standing against the sky and leading eastwards to the Hymettos's double peak. (ibid., 177-181).

Although Jeanneret was not aware of these alignments, his interest in primitive and classical cultures had led him to the symbolism of primitive sacred imagery. A paradigmatic example of his early acquaintance with primitive sacred symbols is Collignon, *Mythologie figurée de la Grèce* (Paris: Quantin, 1883), a book that he owned since 1903, as pointed in Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 240.

Etlin has noted that Le Corbusier anticipated Scully's interpretation of the axial arrangement of the Acropolis space linking the double peak of Salamis and that of the Hymettos. Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 210n141. There is however a fundamental difference between Le Corbusier's approach in 1911 and in 1923 when he published *Vers une architecture*. While in his book Le Corbusier published a photograph by Boissonnas taken from the Propylaia looking east along the axis, in 1911 he focused on the west direction. Jeanneret's continued interest in the alignment with the breast-like double peak of Salamis is reinforced by another photograph by Boissonnas, showing the Propylaia and the double peak silhouette on axis. He wrote below it: "L'émotion naît de quoi? D'un certain rapport entre des éléments catégoriques: cylindres, sol poli, murs polis. D'une concordance avec les choses du site. D'un système plastique qui étend ses effets sur chaque partie de la composition. D'une unité d'idée allant de l'unité de matières jusqu'à l'unité de la modénature." Le Corbusier-Saugnier "Pure création de l'esprit," 104-105; Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 167- 168.

**110** This watercolor has been discussed as an image of the Propylaia, but in such a diagonal view the temple of Wingless Victory would have blocked the view over the landscape. On more careful scrutiny, one can see that it was painted from the steps of the north flank of the Parthenon, from a lower position than that of the peristyle, next to the north-west corner, diagonally looking across the west pronaos. The second column of the north façade fills in the foreground on the right. On the left, the first column of the inner row of columns resting above the two steps leading to the cell is clearly visible; cf. Gresleri, *Il linguaggio delle pietre*, 121; Brooks, *Formative Years*, 285; Bruno Maurer, "Akropolis," in *Le*





FIG. 277 Jeanneret. Parthenon. West pronaos with double peak in the background.  
 FIG. 278 Parthenon. North-West corner looking westwards. From Collignon, *Le Parthénon*.

Parthenon and specific natural elements. I will return to this shortly. The important thing to retain for now is that, like most images made from the precinct, the watercolors concern the relationship of the Parthenon with the west landscape.

When these three sets of images are put side by side, we recognize in them a three-step experience: a comprehensive overview of the Acropolis and the Attic landscape seen from afar, an ascending experience leading to the elevated plateau and associated with the ritual route of the Panathenaea procession, and the view over the west landscape. One cannot but associate these sequential sets with the three stages described by Baud-Bovy and Schuré.

It is worth noting that Jeanneret's narrative leading to the west landscape view substantially differs from the historical accounts of the Panathenaea procession; and from Choisy's picturesque sequence of controlled views (fig. 279).<sup>111</sup> Choisy's major four frames, treated as landscape compositions, follow the route of the Panathenaea. Like Jeanneret's promenade, Choisy's entails an experience unfolding over time. But Choisy omits the final frame in the ceremonial route. It may be argued that the final step of Choisy's narrative is implicit in the widely diffused view that the original processional route extended eastwards between the Parthenon and the Erectheion, until it reached the east door of the Parthenon's cell. This is suggested by the dashed line in the plan published in his *Histoire* (fig. 280) and by his own words.<sup>112</sup> Whatever the case may be, Choisy's sequence naturally leads eastwards.

Jeanneret was well acquainted with these descriptions. The Baedeker guide, for instance, not only describes in detail the winding ascent, it also reproduces a plan of the Acropolis with a winding path linking the Propylaea to the Parthenon's east fa-

...

Corbusier *und die industrie*, 176; Françoise Véry, "Athènes," in *Le Passé à réaction poétique*, 56-57.

111 Choisy, "Le pittoresque dans l'art grec : parties dissymétriques, pondération des masses," in *Histoire de l'architecture*, 1:412-420.

112 "Il est des temples grecs dont l'axe se dirige vers les lieux saints de la divinité qu'on y adore : de même que les mosquées musulmanes regardent la Mecque et les églises Jérusalem, tel temple de Vénus a son axe tourné vers Cythère, tel temple d'Apollon vers Délos. Plus ordinairement, les temples sont orientés le pronaos regardant le levant. Le Parthénon offre un curieux exemple de cet usage, avec son frontispice tourné non vers les Propylées mais vers l'arrière de l'Acropole." Choisy, "Le pittoresque dans l'art grec," 424-425.

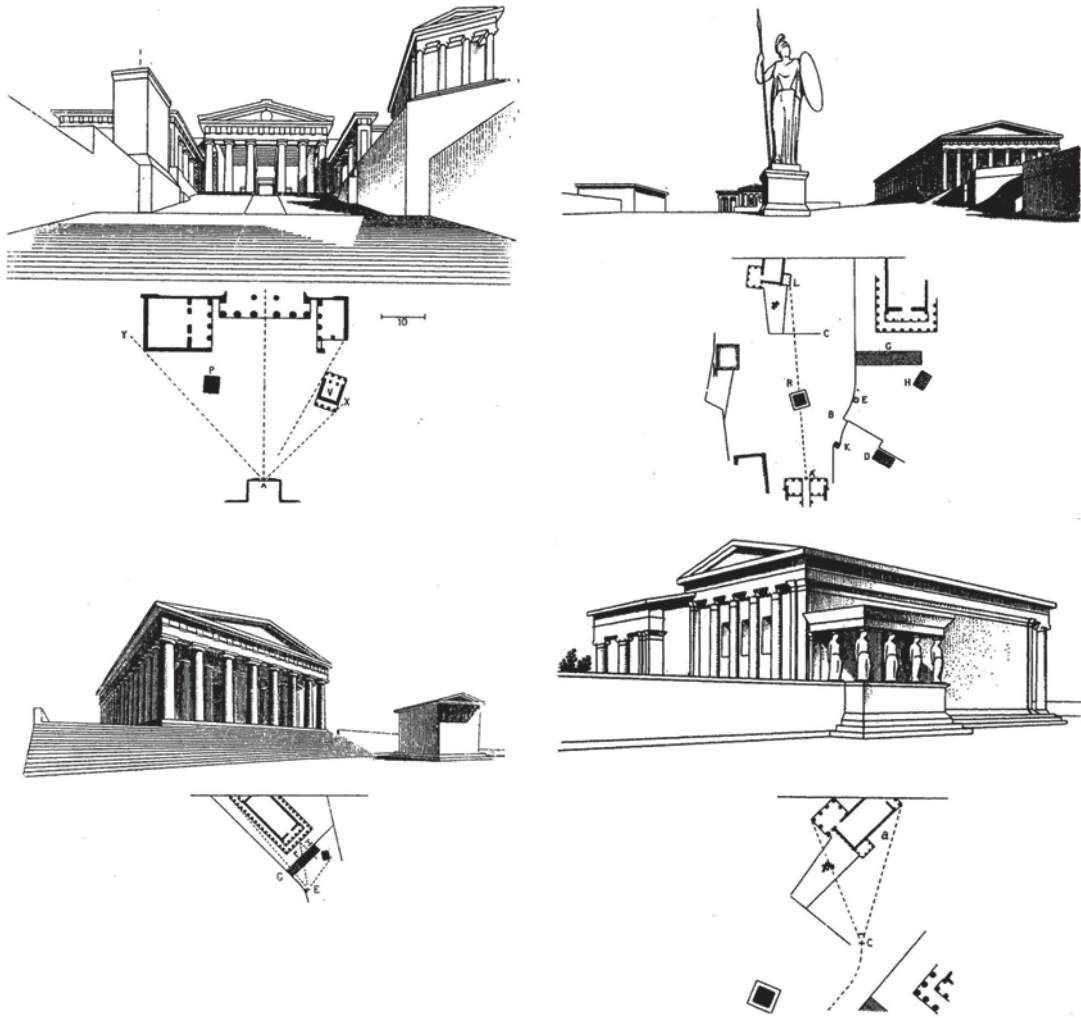
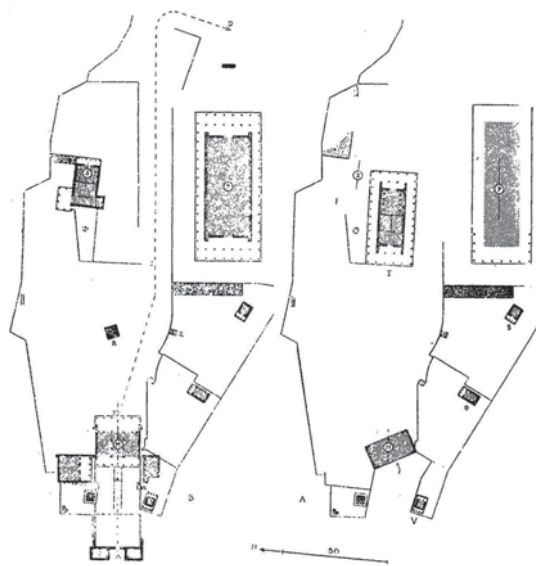


FIG. 279 Choisy. Acropolis. Sequential controlled views. From Choisy, *Histoire de l'architecture*.

Axial approach to the Propylaea  
Statue of Athenas Promacos

Oblique approach to the Parthenon  
Oblique approach to the Erechtheion

FIG. 280 Choisy. Acropolis such as rebuilt by Pericles and before 480 a.c. Plans. From Choisy, *Histoire de l'architecture*.



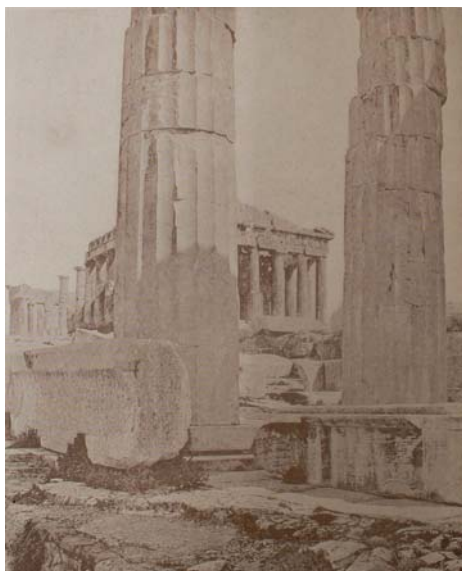


FIG. 281 Parthenon seen from the Propylaea. From Lucien Magne, *Le Parthénon*.

çade.<sup>113</sup> But Jeanneret's sketches show that he rather focused on the encounter with the west landscape view. From this perspective, Jeanneret's 1911 interpretation of the Acropolis shows no traces of Choisy's sequence.

But beyond the imagery of the Panathenaea, the literature would naturally have led Jeanneret to focus on the landscape view after the ascent. An example is Magne's account of the arrival at the top:

“Lorsque, suivant le chemin des processions, on gravit à l'est les gradins du portique extérieur, la scène change: c'est la mer et les îles d'Égine et de Salamine qu'on aperçoit entre les colonnes, tandis que vers l'est s'élève le Pentélique aux lignes simples, au nord le Parnès se colorant suivant l'heure du jour en rose clair ou en bleu foncé.”<sup>114</sup>

In short, the Acropolis was commonly described in terms of the changing scene experienced by the visitor: after the ascent one encounters the view. The fact that Jeanneret focused on the west direction rather than on a 360 degrees panorama does not annul the essence of Magne's depiction: the encounter with the landscape at the top. The resemblance between Jeanneret's sketch of the Parthenon filtered by the Propylaea and the illustration with which Magne complements his description reinforces that Jeanneret saw it as a key moment of a larger experience (fig. 281, compare with fig. 267).

Note also that the drawings made from the precinct don't portray the full view offered from the center of the front colonnade of the Parthenon, rather hinting at

<sup>113</sup> Baedeker, *Grèce*, “L'Acropole d'Athènes d'après I. A. Kaupert,” 38-39. For the description of the processional route see *ibid.*, 45-47.

<sup>114</sup> Magne, *Le Parthénon*, 4. For a similar depiction see, for instance, Collignon, *L'Archéologie grecque*, 82.

pieces of it as one approaches obliquely to the temple's axis. In so doing, one may also interpret them in the context of the preceding sequential frames of the Propylaia, constructing a continuous narrative towards the west landscape view. Jeanneret's interpretation of the Acropolis in narrative terms seems therefore clear.

The structure of this unfolding experience resonates with that experience proposed in the Villa Fallet—a winding, ascending path leading to a building articulating the approach with a final view over the landscape and the mountains' silhouette after a turn-around at the top. And after his German sojourn, Jeanneret was now in a position to re-elaborate the former narrative through the aesthetic categories of space-form, volume-form, and perceptual dynamics.

While the notion of architectural volume-form was certainly present in 1911—in Jeanneret's 1914 text he writes on the Parthenon seen from afar as a “sovereign cube facing the sea”<sup>115</sup>—the sketches from the precinct focus on the space between the temples. Portrayed as impenetrable solids, the buildings' volume-forms define the enclosed vacant space, framing and directing the view towards the landscape. Jeanneret would have been naturally driven to such interpretation by his Sittesque background in general and by Sitte's arguments on the Acropolis in particular. The Acropolis is, according to Sitte, the ultimate expression of the meeting places of Antiquity, an enclosed space enriched by well placed monuments and statues, where collective manifestation takes place. This entails, we have seen, the categories of volume-form, space-form, and perceptual dynamics, as well as the Romantic notion of a lived experience. All of these, I suggested, had also played a role in Jeanneret's responsiveness to Turkey.

Despite the new categories involved, one must note the absence of analytical drawings or photographs of the Parthenon portrayed as a single, autonomous unit in 1911. This indicates that Jeanneret seemed less concerned with the self-referential quality of the Parthenon than with its role in the comprehensive experience of the Acropolis. This is particularly true of the drawing made from the Propylaia, the single one where the Parthenon is entirely portrayed. Jeanneret was focused on the temporal experience of the perceiver. Filtered by the columns of the Propylaia, Jeanneret depicts the Parthenon obliquely, as an isolated volume set against the sky, like the statue of Donatello, that is, like a sculptural volume.<sup>116</sup> The juxtaposition of the two buildings emphasizes the distance and slope between them which one has to cross, while the oblique position of the temple's volume anticipates the direction of the imminent encounter with the landscape at the top. Recalling the experience of the Villa Fallet and

115 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 154.

116 I am referring to Jeanneret's observations on Donatello's statue in Padua in the manuscript “La Construction des villes,” treated in the preceding chapter.

its garden—particularly in the view towards the house from the top of the winding path of the private access—the drawing depicts the precise moment at which the Parthenon looms against the sky with its axis pointing to a specific direction backwards. If we keep in mind Jeanneret’s attention to the axial relationship with the landscape and we recall some of his drawings—such as those of the south façade of the Royal Palace in Prague or the watercolor of the church in Grabovo (fig. 200, 201)—it seems clear that, more than looking at the Parthenon as the final moment of the Acropolis experience, Jeanneret saw it as an architectural volume articulating the transition from winding ascent to the final landscape view.

Standing free on the empty plateau, the Parthenon acts as a pivot between the winding ascent and the guiding axis, that is, conveying the direction the eye must follow and bringing the ascending path to an end. In this respect, it seems plausible to speak of a dynamic experience of form such as conceived in the *Einfühlung* theories. Just as, in his German studies on urban planning, Jeanneret had transferred the kinesthetic sensation sparked by the rhythmic façades of curving streets into the idea of an effective bodily displacement in space, so it seems reasonable to think that he could interpret the oblique approach to the columnar rhythm and the horizontal entablature of the Parthenon in terms of the perceiver’s kinesthetic feeling, inducing the turn towards the west.

This is more explicitly expressed in the angled photograph of the Parthenon (fig. 267), which connects the rhythmic columnar direction with the west landscape. By *attributing to the static lines, surfaces, and volumes the movement that our eyes and our kinesthetic sensation suggest to us*, to use Schmarsow’s words, the photograph evokes the perceiver’s bodily experience and motor intentionality.<sup>117</sup>

In sum, while Jeanneret’s picturesque background remains at the root of his approach to the Acropolis, it is now layered by the notions of space, volume-form, perceptual dynamics, and guiding axis; hence, the unusual composition of his photograph.

It is in 1915 that the larger implications of this reading seem to emerge. While

117 Based on studies on perception according to which there is a limitation in the human capacity to assimilate up to seven objects without reference to counting process—eight being on the very limit of that capacity—Scully has argued that the octastyle façade of the Parthenon forces the eye capacity beyond the normal limit. As a consequence of this fact and of the enlarged space between columns, the temple is not easily perceived as a single unity, as usually happens in Doric temples. Rather, the eye is forced to return again and again to the building. Due to its scale and to the diminishing perspective of the oblique approach, the Parthenon carries the eye eastwards along its major axis. As one mounts the sloping space between the Erechtheion and the Parthenon, one is led eastwards until reaching high enough to discover the final vanishing point defined by the perspective set up by both buildings, the sacred horn-like silhouette of Hymettos, beyond the great altar of Athena where the cult took place. Scully thus concludes that, by achieving a balance between architecture conceived as a hollow—with internal space—and an impenetrable exterior form, the Parthenon acts simultaneously as the vanishing point into which the eye penetrates and as a device to direct the view beyond itself leading eastwards. Scully, *The Earth*, 155-185, 223n14. I am suggesting that in 1911 Jeanneret’s attention to the west landscape led him to interpret this effect in the reverse direction.



reading at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Jeanneret wrote in his sketchbook: “L’Acropole qui est une œuvre d’adaptation d’appropriation est-elle construite sur une idée génératrice? Se renseigner.” This shows that by then, through Choisy’s theory or otherwise, Jeanneret was thinking of the whole Acropolis as a unitary composition, that is, as a space ordered by freestanding volumes.<sup>118</sup> He thus continues the focus of his drawings from 1911, all concerned with the notion of space and of a guiding intention established by the architectural volume-form of the Parthenon.

Let us finally address the issue of meaning. Influenced by Schuré, I have suggested, Jeanneret thought of the Acropolis as a sphinx, a symbol of the immanence of the divine in nature, connecting man with the universe and the grand Pan through its cosmic and pantheistic axes. Influenced by Blanc, he thought of these axes in terms of the Sublime, as evocations of the incommensurable and most imposing characters of nature, the infinite and the divine, in contrast with the curve, which pertains to the field of beauty, the finite and the human body.<sup>119</sup> In his 1914 essay on Mount Athos, Jeanneret argued for the infinite meaning of the words “horizontal” and “vertical”:

“L’obsession du symbole est au fond de moi d’une expression-type du langage, circonscrite à la valeur de quelques mots. La vocation en est cause : le régime des pierres et des charpentes, des volumes, des pleins et des vides, m’a valu une compréhension peut-être trop générale de la verticale et de l’horizontale, du sens de la longueur, de la profondeur, de la hauteur. Et de considérer ces éléments, ces mots même, comme détenteurs de significations infinies, inutiles à diluer puisque le mot en soi, dans son absolue et forte unité, les exprime toutes ... Que le rythme agence déjà ces grands termes d’expression ! ... La considération du Parthénon, bloc, colonnes et architraves, suffira à mes désirs comme la mer en soi et rien que pour ce mot ... Tout l’Orient m’a paru forgé à grandes coups de symboles. J’en rapporte la vision jaune d’un ciel, quand bien même il lui arriva si souvent d’être bleu, celle brune des terres et le souvenir unique des temples de pierre et des maisons d’hommes, de torchis ou de bois.”<sup>120</sup>

Passanti has noted in this passage a linguistic approach to the visual arts hark-

**118** Le Corbusier, Sketchbook A2, repr. in *Le Corbusier Carnets, 1914-1948*, n.p.. As far as the 1911 visit is concerned, Lucan has argued that by that time Jeanneret had not read Choisy, pointing out that he bought Choisy’s *Histoire* at Christmas 1913. Based on this 1915 annotation, he concluded that Jeanneret had read Choisy’s chapter on the Acropolis only in 1915. Lucan’s assessment has been rejected by Mogens Krstrup and Gresleri. See Lucan, “Tout a commencé là,” in *Encyclopédie*, 21-22; Krstrup, “Det Undsigelige Rum / The Ineffable Space,” B, *Arkitekturtidsstirifr* no. 50, Arkus, 1994; Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*, 44; idem., “Il Silenzio delle pietre,” 76, 78; idem., “À la Villa d’Hadrien,” in *L’Italie de Le Corbusier*, 38. In addition, see Etlin, “Choisy, and French Hellenism,” 264-278. From our perspective, what interests us is that, regardless of whether Jeanneret had read Choisy or not, his sketches, photographs, and watercolors show that Choisy was not the key to his interpretation of the Acropolis.

**119** On Le Corbusier’s understanding of the Acropolis in the light of the category of the Sublime see Etlin, “Le Corbusier, Choisy, and French Hellenism,” 274; Passanti, “Aesthetic Dimension,” 33.

**120** Le Corbusier, *Voyage d’Orient*, 125-126.

ing back to symbolist ideas, namely Mallarmé's search for a "poetic language different from that of everyday transactions," in which words become related with an essential use of language by evoking dense notions. This suggests that, in his reductive aesthetics of the 1920s, Le Corbusier was not so much seeking ideal truth or beauty, but intensity of meaning, achieved by reducing architecture to essential forms.<sup>121</sup>

It is this same process of reducing to essentials the dense meaning of the experience that we find in Jeanneret's drawings and photographs. Two interconnected aspects are the purposeful manipulation of reality and the focus on the axial relationship between the Parthenon and the far mountain peaks. Let me take but one example. In the watercolors from the north flank (fig. 275, 276), Jeanneret excised the Propylaia and the temple of Wingless Victory, either by means of the narrow framing (cf. with fig. 270) or of manipulation of the real view. From that viewpoint, in reality, the upper edge of the Propylaia it is still clearly visible above the terrain of the foreground. In Jeanneret's watercolors, nothing exists between the Acropolis and the mountain peak but the sea and the plain. In addition, he shortened the plain, enhancing the presence of the sea and of the double peak—the latter increased in scale—dramatizing the axial confrontation. Simultaneously, by adopting a viewpoint from the temple's steps, Jeanneret emphasized the non-human scale of the temple, the sense of depth and grandeur, and the axial direction. The eye is carried along by the steps' perspective pointing to the vanishing point in the center of the composition, where the breast-like double peak of Salamis stands.

All his sketches and photographs seem consistent on this reductive aim. This manipulation of reality reduces the experience to essentials: the realignment of man with the meaningful symbols. These vertical and horizontal axes express unity and the Absolute (*le mot en soi, dans son absolue et forte unité, les exprime toutes*), reducing nature, the temple, and the experience to essentials through an axis anchoring the natural and the manmade—the symbolic synthesis of an accordance between man and nature, mediated by architecture. A lived experience discloses the Absolute through the phenomenal: "L'impression physique, c'est qu'un souffle plus profond dilate votre poitrine."<sup>122</sup> Jeanneret sought to portray this archetypal experience; hence the focus on mountain peaks, the careful framing isolating them and the temple, and the simplified representation, deliberately altering reality in order to seize the intensity of meaning. The retrospective essay summarizes the experience:

"Ayant escaladé des gradins trop hauts ... j'entrai dans le temple par l'axe. Et m'étant d'un coup retourné, j'embrassai de ce poste autrefois réservé aux dieux et au prêtre,

121 Passanti, "Architecture," 87-88.

122 Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 161.

toute la mer et le Péloponèse ; mer flambante, monts obscurs déjà, bientôt mordus par le disque du soleil. L'à-pic de la colline et surélévation du temple au-dessus des dalles des Propylées, dérobent à la perception tout vestige de vie moderne, et d'un coup, deux mille ans sont abolis, une âpre poésie vous saisit ... vous subissez la secousse brutale et demeurez vibrant.

...

Les prêtres sortaient de la cella et sous le portique, sentant à leur dos et leurs flancs, le giron des monts, leur regard horizontal par-dessus les Propylées, s'en allait à la mer et aux monts lointains qu'elle baigne ... le soleil jusqu'au crépuscule décrit sa course ... son disque le soir, touche aux terres dans l'axe même du temple. La couronne de pierre qui limite le plateau a ce don de distraire tout soupçon de vie. L'esprit prompt s'empare et plonge abasourdi, dans un lointain qu'il ne faut pas reconstituer. Car ce serait beau aussi, qu'hors la réalité, -ces temples, cette mer, ces monts, toute cette Pierre et cette eau, - ne fussent que pour une heure, le rêve intrépide d'un cerveau créateur. Quelle chose !"<sup>123</sup>

Another passage by Jeanneret raises urban implications similar to those already observed in Istanbul:

"... du flanc du Lycabette, dominant l'Acropole, j'ai vu, au-delà de la ville moderne s'allumant, la colline désemparee, et sa vigie de marbre – le Parthénon – la dominer pour la conduire, semblait-il, vers le Pirée, à la mer ... l'impassible pilote qui, de tout le mouvement de ses flancs allongés, maintient la direction ... Le paysage entier se suspend à l'horizontale barre de la mer. Le nœud sombre qui agrafe le ciel à la nuit des terres, c'est le noir pilote de marbre."<sup>124</sup>

Just as the Ottoman mosques mark Istanbul, so the Parthenon marks the Mediterranean landscape with a meaningful symbol. Through its simple, abstract forms and axes, it sets up an initiatory relationship with nature. Istanbul and the Ottoman mosques, on the one hand, and the Attic landscape and the Acropolis on the other, are complementary in the elaboration of Le Corbusier's ordering code.

## ITALY: FROM MONUMENT TO DWELLING

After Athens, Eleusis, and Delphi, Jeanneret followed to Patrai, where he took the boat to Brindisi, then the train to Naples, where he arrived in early October. After devoting his stay mainly to Pompeii, he travelled to Rome, the last stop of the trip. Before returning home, he revisited Ema and Pisa.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 159-161.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 166-167.



FIG. 282 Jeanneret. Gesù Nuovo church. Façade.

FIG. 283 Jeanneret. Gesù Nuovo church. Detail of the façade, 1911.

FIG. 284 Jeanneret. Villa Salve, Vomero Vecchio.

FIG. 285 Jeanneret. Italy. Street.

The very first sketches of Naples illustrate his particular attention to the aesthetic categories of volume and space. The first one portrays the façade of the Gesù Nuovo church. The annotations and a photograph clarify the subject of his interest: “toute la façade en pointes de diamante / effet énorme imposant d’unité / ... ca fait / hérissé-ment / splendide” (fig. 282, 283). The attention to the pyramidal ornamental forms parallels that to the simple forms of architecture of the second sketch (fig. 284): “pris à cause du volume. Mur rouge assez fort.” The following sketch concerns a curved street with two high walls (fig. 285). It is clearly about contained space and testifies his continuing interest in Sitte. In sum, when Jeanneret arrived in Italy he was focused on abstract, simple architectural forms and in the Sittesque notion of urban space-form.

What interests us here is how Italy contributed to the concepts and experiences acquired in Turkey and Athens, bringing them to the realm of the dwelling and daily life. For this purpose, I will focus on two aspects of Jeanneret’s visit to Pompeii—his attention to the dwelling typologies and to the Roman temple.

Jeanneret was acquainted with the dwelling typology of Pompeii since the reading of Riat. After Turkey he had however an additional reference, the Green mosque. The connection is expressed by Jeanneret himself in a note next to the sketches of the Silver Wedding House (Casa delle Nozze d’Argento). His comment concerns scale and light contrasts. Below a perspective of the open atrium Jeanneret draws the oecus noting the huge scale and dim lighting contrasting with the lit garden in the background: “1 hauteur de cathédrale pleine d’ombre et au fond l’éclat du jardin” (fig. 286). The plan in the following page reads: “la variation des gdeus de porte joue un rôle énorme. Il

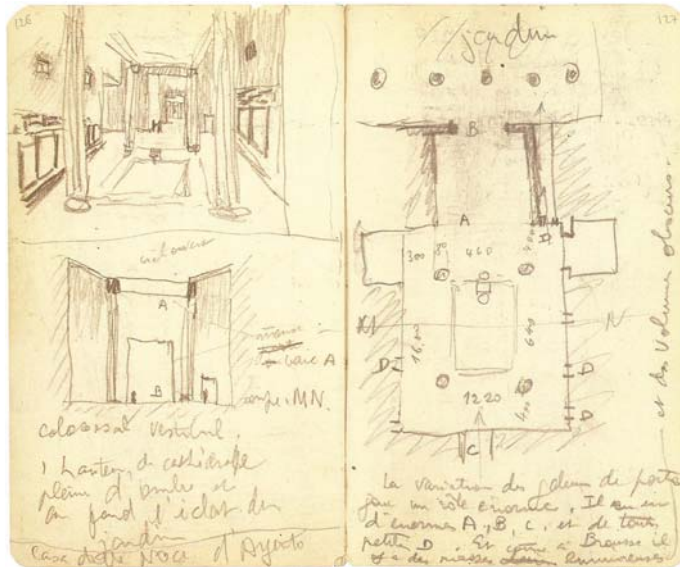


FIG. 286 Jeanneret. Pompeii. Silver Wedding House. Perspectives and plan.

en est d'énormes A,B,C, et de toutes petites D. Et comme à Brousse il y a des masses lumineuses et des volumes obscurs."<sup>125</sup> The similarity with Bursa's mosque is evident, going beyond scale and light contrast. It is about the rhythmic sequential assembling of cubic space-forms, the way in which it achieves unity maintaining the individuality of the parts, and the experience they provide. He writes of "masses of light and dim volumes" (*des masses lumineuses et des volumes obscurs*), clearly referring to space. Also, his drawings leave no doubt about his understanding of the unitary scheme of assembled individual volumes, relating differently to the central atrium and submitted to a driving intention.

The sketches of the House of Marcus Lucretius show similar concerns. Here, the rear garden providing visual focus is elevated, resonating with the raised prayer hall of the Green mosque (fig. 287, 288). Incidentally, as in the majority of the Pompeian sketches, Jeanneret marks the entry direction with an arrow in the plan, just as he had in Perret's plans, while the angled views impart depth and confer a dynamic spatial quality along the longitudinal axis.<sup>126</sup> This reveals Jeanneret's attention to the sequen-

125 In an axial perspective of the House of Sallust (FLC 5887) Jeanneret returns to the comparison with the Turkish mosques, noting the scale after the access and the view over the trellis framed by the oecus: "Ds cette maison on entre et c'est très vaste: par le baie du fond on voit la treille. 1 baie – 5m de large ! Les portes ont 135 de large et 4,50 de haut ! C'est comme ds 1 mosquée."

126 The connection between the experience of the Pompeian houses, the Turkish mosques (more implicitly) and their volumes and light, on the one hand, and the theme of "la marche" that Jeanneret inherited from Perret on the other—"cette sensation au passage de plusieurs pièces"—resurfaces in his writings about the Maison Schwob in Ozenfant, "Une ville de Le Corbusier." See the quotation in chap. 3 of this work.



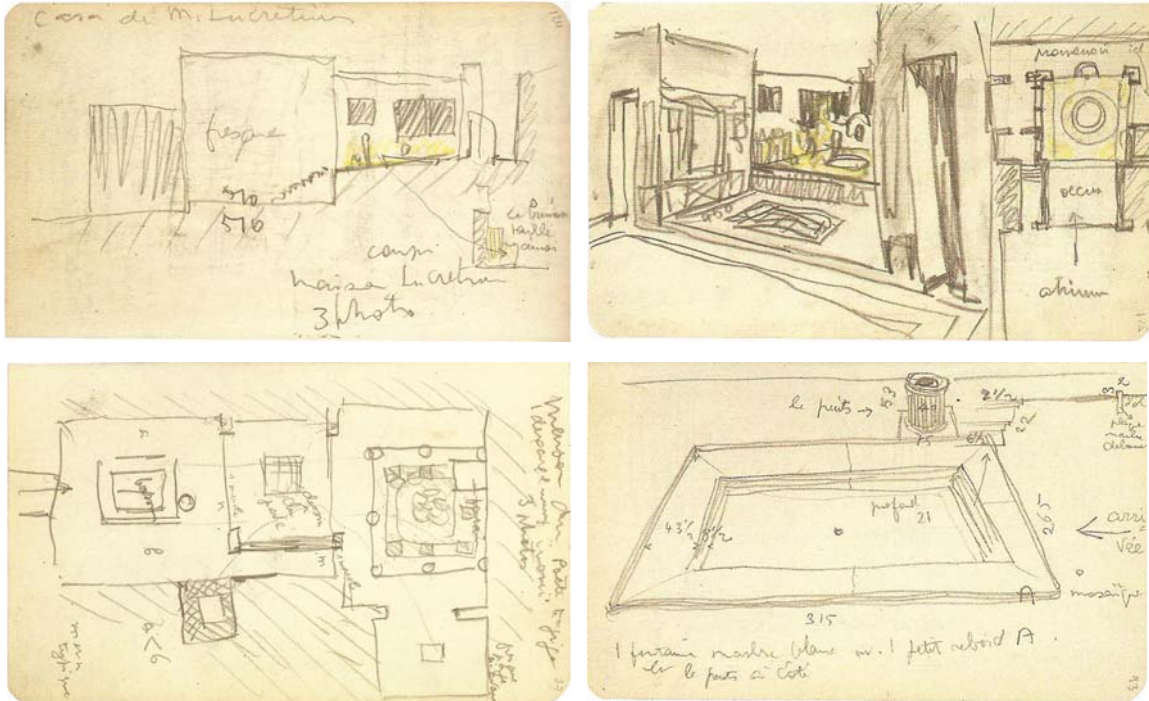


FIG. 287 Jeanneret. House of Marcus Lucretius. Longitudinal cross-section.

FIG. 288 Jeanneret. House of Marcus Lucretius. Perspective.

FIG. 289 Jeanneret. House of the Tragic Poet. Plan.

FIG. 290 Jeanneret. House of the Tragic Poet. Impluvium.

tiality of the scheme and to the experiential transition between two distinct phenomenological worlds—public and private—achieved by means of a narrow corridor which secures the intimacy of the dwelling. All in all, in their autonomous inner worlds, the Green mosque and the Pompeian house provide the same fundamental composition of space, formal simplicity, and emotional experience. Pompeii thus brings the experience of Bursa—the merging of aesthetic and spiritual experiences—to the realm of the dwelling.

The paradigmatic example is the House of the Tragic Poet, incorporating asymmetries in the axial development of assembled cubic spaces (fig. 289). Here, Jeanneret found the conjunction of two principles that he would explore in the 1920s. Like in the Green mosque or the French *hôtel*, the ordering axis secures the guiding intention. But Jeanneret could recognize in the subtle asymmetries the picturesque principles underlying his German readings on town planning, for example Martin's chapter on streets, which calls for the interruption of infinite perspectives by "displacing the axis" or by "breaking it."<sup>127</sup> The dynamic quality of this arrangement is the principle of the house La Roche-Jeanneret, where volume is a generator of architecture.<sup>128</sup> Also, he paid particular attention to the asymmetrical composition of the impluvium, well, and pool (fig. 290). An arrow (mistakenly) marking the direction of the entrance contextualizes their asymmetrical arrangement in the spatial experience. Embedded in this drawing

127 Martin, "Streets," 201.

128 See Forster, "Antiquity and Modernity," 147; Passanti, "Architecture," 96-97.

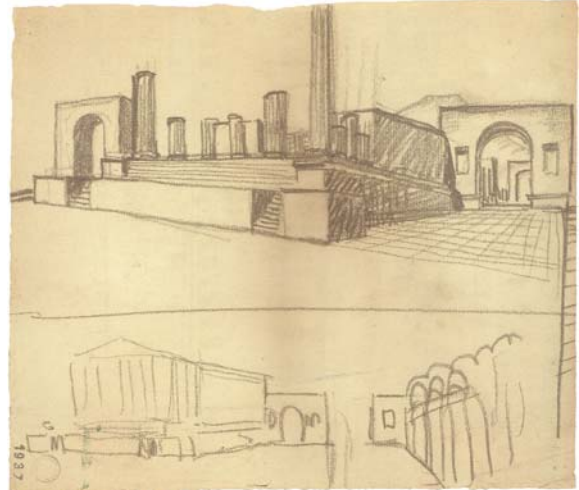
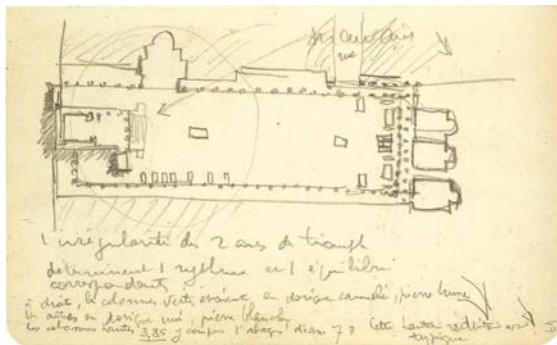


FIG. 291 Jeanneret. Forum at Pompeii. Plan.  
 FIG. 292 Jeanneret. Forum at Pompeii. Temple of Jupiter, 1911.

is therefore a second principle which, harking back to Bursa's multi-domed Ulu Camii, attained its highest expression in the Villa Savoye: a pure space-form within which the elements of daily activity are disposed according to their own reasons, internalizing a meandering path though submitted to the driving axis. In short, several dualities coalesce in the House of the Tragic Poet: Classical and picturesque, space-form and volume-form, ritual and everyday life, absolute and phenomenal.

Let us now turn to Jeanneret's reaction to the Roman temples. In Tivoli, Jeanneret will remark that "in each Roman room there are always three full walls. The other wall opens generously and lets the room participate in the ensemble."<sup>129</sup> His sensitivity to this elementary type—the basis of the Citrohan cell—extends back to the Pompeian temples, where it is associated with its elevated position and relationship with the landscape.

Jeanneret's main reference in interpreting the Pompeian Forum is Sitte, with his discourse on secluded space and his analogy with a furnished main hall of a dwelling. Sitte's discourse resurfaces in Jeanneret's attention to the enclosing colonnade or to the asymmetrical position of the two arches flanking the temple of Jupiter—restricting the opening of the streets and filtering the view over the forum (fig. 291, 292). Jeanneret also drew particular attention to the pedestals on the south side of the forum, reading

<sup>129</sup> "il faut retenir ça que ds toute salle romaine il y a toujours 3 murs plein. L'autre mur s'ouvre largement et fait participer la salle à l'ensemble." *VdO Carnets*, 5:83. This annotation was made during his visit to the Piazza D'Oro in Villa Adriana.

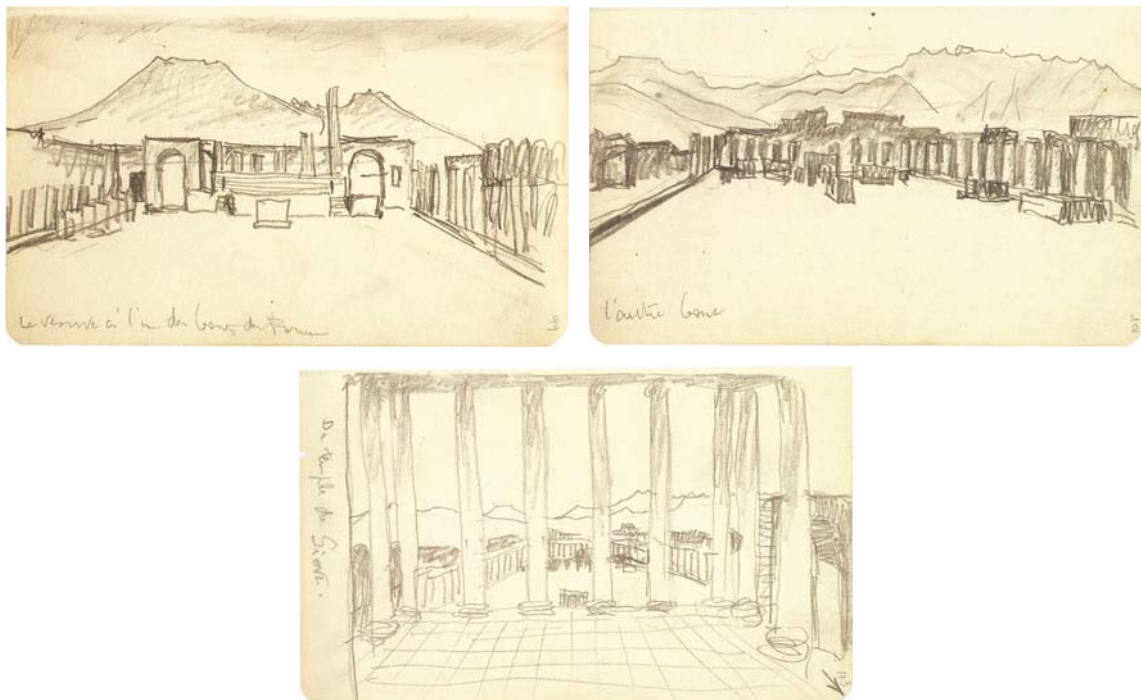


FIG. 293 Jeanneret. Forum at Pompeii. Temple of Jupiter with the Vesuvius in the background.

FIG. 294 Jeanneret. Forum at Pompeii. Opposite view with the Lattari mountains in the background.

FIG. 295 Jeanneret. Forum at Pompeii. View from the cella of the Temple of Jupiter.

them as freestanding elements, randomly disposed and generating space: “ces socles se ferment merveilleusement, engendrant une architecture.”<sup>130</sup> More importantly, he was attentive to the dialog between the forum and the landscape, reading the form as a space axially anchored between two natural symbols: the Vesuvius’s conic peak to the north—“Le Vésuve à l’un des bouts du Forum” (fig. 293); and the Lattari mountains to the south—“L’autre bout” (fig. 294).

This axial relationship is further explored from the inside of the elevated cella of the temple of Jupiter (fig. 295).<sup>131</sup> The association between the layout of the building, the Forum, and the landscape seen from the interior is apparent. The columns, reconstructed, create a filter between inside and outside. Beyond them, the architectural space-form and volume-forms are set against the mountains’ silhouette. Jeanneret notes the axial arrangement of space, the altar, the mountain peak in the ridge, and the rising sun:

“c’est magistral – je dessine ça depuis le seuil de la cella. L’autel du Forum est à sa meilleure place et, juste au-delà de la colonnade ça fait 1 gd à-pic... Puis on voit les socles du fond ; puis ceux de droite. Le dallage du vestibule s’ajute à celui du forum. A droite il y a l’arc de triomphe, tout près. Il faut que le soleil du matin soit juste dans l’axe. Ça fait toutes choses noires ; mais le pavé blanc au delà, la gde vague glauque des monts. Les

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130 *VdO Carnets*, 4:25. See also the photograph BV, LC-108-471

131 The drawing was later published in *L’Esprit nouveau* and in *Vers une architecture*, and Jeanneret painted a watercolor of the same view, which he integrated in the series *Langage des Pierres* (FLC 2859).



FIG. 296 Jeanneret. Pompeii. Cella of the Temple of Apollo.  
 FIG. 297 Jeanneret. Pompeii. View from the cella of the Temple of Apollo.

mesures sont la cause de cette beauté.”<sup>132</sup>

We have seen that, arguing about the strong influence of geography on the human soul, as in the case of the “Hellenic shores, ... lower Italy and other happy regions,” Sitte had discussed the view from the temple of Jupiter to introduce the notion of a city conceived as an artistic enterprise, providing a harmonious relationship between life, the city, and a mythical Mediterranean landscape. Jeanneret could now enrich Sitte’s connection of architecture and landscape with his own experience of the Acropolis. As in Athens, he focused on the drama between architecture and nature, compressing its meaning in the axial relationship between the cubic volume of the temple and the mountains. The space of the forum and its simple architectural forms mediate between both.

Reduced to essentials, the temple and the forum (the paws) are a sphinx, that is, a vertical axis (the raised platform of the cella) and a horizontal one, directing the gaze towards the rising sun and the mountains. But whereas in the Acropolis Jeanneret focused on the space between buildings, in Pompeii man is brought into the pantheistic axis, fully participating in the sublime experience. The sphinx becomes inhabitable. It is no longer a monument just to be seen from the outside, but to be experienced also from the inside out. Here too, then, Pompeii brings an early experience to the realm of the dwelling. And in this sense, the Pompeian temple is the mediating key between the reading of Istanbul and the Acropolis, on the one hand, and Le Corbusier’s elevated cells directed towards the sun and the landscape on the other. Incidentally, Jeanneret’s retrospective essay on the Acropolis depicts the view from the Parthenon’s cella after the ascent.

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Notice that the experience of the temple of Jupiter involves the idea of a temporal development. On the one hand, this is suggested by Sitte: “One is powerfully drawn to ascend the flight of steps of the Temple of Jupiter,” he wrote, “in order to view from its

132 *VdO Carnets*, 4:102.





FIG. 298 Jeanneret. Pompeii. Temple of Apollo. Plan of the precinct.

FIG. 299 Jeanneret. Pompeii. Temple of Apollo. Perspective.

podium over and over again the noble spectacle that is spread before his eyes, and out of which surge rich harmonies like the most beautiful music—pure and sonorous.”<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, after Athens Jeanneret could hardly fail to associate the final contemplation of the landscape with an elaborate narrative preceding it. The sketch from the cella is instructive. While the reconstructed columns evoke the notion of shelter, one senses a temporal ordering of events through their filtering role—a device, we have seen, commonly used in his early landscape representations of the Jura.

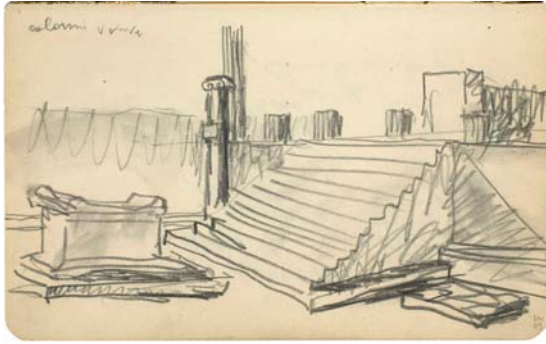
A similar interpretation can also be read in his images of the temple of Apollo, located behind the Forum’s western colonnade. Here, the view from the elevated cella and the narrative are more explicitly associated with the interaction between abstract volume-forms and space-form.

The first drawing is a perspective of the cella in which Jeanneret notes its axial openness (fig. 296). This is followed by a plan (*VdO Carnets*, 4:27) and a view from the inside looking back through the entry, registering the relationship between the inside, the precinct, and the mountain silhouette in the background: “vue de l’int dep. l’autel” (fig. 297). Like in the temple of Jupiter, the consideration of the interior space in the experience of the drama between architecture and nature is paralleled by Jeanneret’s attention to the typological solution of the cella: a space bounded on three sides and opening to the forth. The main notion at play is therefore “direction,” understood in its association with “type” and the landscape view.

The next sketch is a general plan, registering the regular enclosed space of the precinct, its peripheral colonnade, and the loose volumes of the temple, altar, votive column (on the side of the temple’s stairs), and two peripheral pedestals (fig. 298). An arrow indicating the main entrance to the precinct reveals Jeanneret’s attention to the dominant axial arrangement and access. The two overall views that follow, made from the southwest corner, focus on the freestanding volumes and temple within the regular form of the peripheral colonnade (fig. 299, *VdO Carnets*, 4:31).

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**FIG. 300** Jeanneret. Pompeii. Temple of Apollo. Detail.  
**FIG. 301** Jeanneret. Pompeii. Temple of Apollo, 1911.

At this point, Jeanneret's attention shifts to the geometry of the loose volumes, registering their abstract quality in a sketch from the southeast (fig. 300, 301). This is also the theme of a photograph taken from the opposite direction, framing the votive column in the center with the temple's stairs and the altar in the middle ground. The three white marble volumes contrast with the dark surrounding masses. Decontextualized, the image renders their abstract quality. As in the case of the unorthodox point of view of the photograph of the Gesù Nuovo church, photography is used not to render reality but to capture a particular interpretation of it: the loose abstract forms. This approach is similar to that of the sketch, whose composition also avoids a broad clarifying context, conveying instead the idea of three individual geometric forms. In pictorial terms, the abstract quality of the composition brings our mind back to Woringer and Appia. One easily reads the accent on geometry—the triangle, the cylinder, and the cube—the play of light and shadow, and a space almost deprived of referents or even gravity. The stairs, the column and the altar appear as forerunners of the *objets types*. Also, they provide human referent. Like in Bursa's multi-domed mosque—the Ulu Camii—they relate to rite, structuring the axial access to the temple through their ritual functions, submitted to a guiding intention.<sup>134</sup>

Having in mind the arrows that he had added to Perret's plans, the Ulu Camii and his experience of the Acropolis, it seems appropriate that Jeanneret's approach to the temple of Apollo should be understood in narrative terms, a narrative developing within the regular space-form, meandering among the freestanding volumes, and leading to the elevated cella which redirects the gaze back onto the landscape—a narrative mediating between man and the landscape disclosing the Absolute through the phenomenal. In this sense, the Roman temple and precinct re-elaborate the experience of the Acropolis, bringing the beholder to the center of the axial alignment of architecture and landscape.

<sup>134</sup> As already mentioned, the abstract quality in Jeanneret's photographs extends back to Edirne. See my essay "Documental Language and Abstraction."

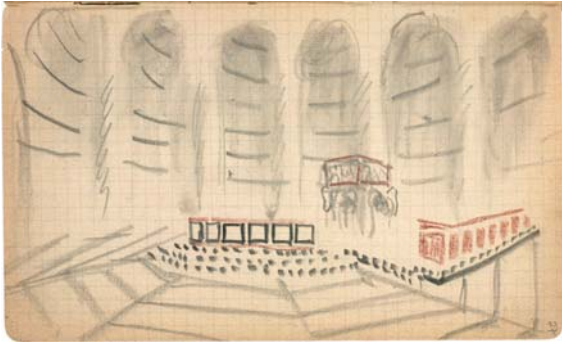


FIG. 302 Jeanneret. Pisa. Interior of the baptistery.  
 FIG. 303 Pisa. Interior of the baptistery.

ON THE WAY BACK HOME After Pompeii, Jeanneret visited Rome and Tivoli. Before returning home, he passed by Florence and Pisa to revisit the monastery of Ema and the Piazza dei Miracoli. He had acquired the tools to reread them and translate his earlier elemental emotional reaction into an architectural and aesthetic reasoning. As far as we are concerned here, these visits meant the confirmation of much of what he had absorbed during the previous itinerary. In the interest of brevity, then, I will skip the rest of the trip, except to shortly note his renewed look upon Pisa.

After the long traveling period that mediates between his two visits to the Piazza dei Miracoli, Jeanneret could now read the regular enclosed space and the loose buildings, arranged upon the horizontal “pelouse verte,” as forming a unitary block set against a mountain ridge in the horizon—“un grand dragon noir qui ondule à l’horizon pour les serrer par la base.” As he had written in his manuscript on town planning, the 15 meter high enclosing wall compensates for the lack of visual cohesion of the loose buildings. This principle is valid for an urban plan as much as for architectural space. It was thus that he read the interior of the baptistery—a regular geometric envelope overlaid with loose elements arranged according to ritual (fig. 302-303). Like Pompeii, Pisa was bringing together the lessons of Ulu Camii and of the Acropolis.

The letter that Jeanneret wrote to Ritter best synthesizes his thinking by the end of the trip:

“Le cadre sera beau demain, tout de marbres adorablement jaunis, conservés impeccablement et dressés dans une pelouse verte ... Toute l’affaire est un bloc, et notez ceci, que je dis çà, moi qui ai vu Athènes !

De la mort j’en ai plein tout moi. Tout s’est écroulé en Italie. L’Italie m’est un cimetière où les dogmes qui furent ma religion, pourrissent sur le sol. Etait-ce croyable, une telle hécatombe ? En quatre ans, j’ai fait une poussée terrible. Je me suis gavé, en Orient, d’unité et de puissance. Mon regard est horizontal, et il ne voit pas les bestioles du chemin. Je me sens brutal. L’Italie m’a fait blasphémateur ... Je balbutie de la géométrie élémentaire avec l’avidité de savoir et de pouvoir un jour. Dans leur course folle, le rouge, le bleu et le jaune, sont devenus blanc. Je suis fou de couleur blanche, du cube, de la sphère, du cylindre et de la pyramide et du disque tout uni et d’une grande étendue vide. Les prismes se dressent s’équilibrent, se rythment, se mettent en marche, ayant un grand dragon noir

qui ondule à l'horizon pour les serrer par la base. Ils n'ont que du ciel blanc au dessus d'eux, posent sur un dallage de marbre poli et sont un monolithe qu'aucune couleur ne pointille. Mais à midi la lumière déploie les cubes en une surface ; au soir, l'arc en ciel surgit des formes. Au matin elles sont réelles, avec des ombres et des lumières claires comme une épure ; On sent leur dessous et leur flancs. La nuit c'est plus que jamais blanc et noir.

... Mais on vivrait entre des grands murs noir et blanc. Ce serait si ennoblissant que notre démarche serait rythmée, nos gestes plastiques, et tout y deviendrait couleur. Tout on le mettrait pour que les proportions fussent belles et vastes. Des peintres et des sculpteurs, on en ferait petit à petit des maçons.

Entendez-vous de la musique là-dedans, voyez-vous se dérouler l'architecture d'une tragédie ?

Voyez-vous l'enfer de joie d'une comédie italienne ? ...

Des rues droites avec des fenêtres en damier aux façades. Pas d'ornement. Une seule couleur, un seul matériau dans toute la ville ...

Ici et là il y aurait un temple, un cylindre, une demi sphère, un cube, un polyèdre. Et des espaces vides, pour souffler."<sup>135</sup>

## ORDERING CODE AND MEDIATING MACHINE

In this thesis I argue that a central aim of Le Corbusier's architecture was to set up a relationship between man and nature, to structure man's experience of nature; and that his *promenade architecturale* is the ordering code through which he set up this relationship. If this was, indeed, a central aim of Le Corbusier's architecture, and if it extends back to his formative years, then we would expect this aim to have played a role in his most significant pursuits of the 1920s. In the introductory chapter of this work, I referred to the common discussion of the Villa Savoye in terms of the promenade. In the following pages, I will briefly suggest several ways in which Le Corbusier's *promenade architecturale*, as an ordering code, is implicated in two more typical or normative examples, even if these were crystallized in response to many different factors: the Citrohan house and the "five points for a new architecture"—two central schemes, the reflection of which spans Le Corbusier's lifelong work.

**THE CITROHAN HOUSE** The hinge between Le Corbusier's formative years and his architecture of the 1920s is the Citrohan house. It is an early theoretical model of a standardized dwelling, both as an individual house (fig. 304, 305) and as a unit within the Immeuble-Villas apartment block (fig. 306). As such, it has a normative quality. Here I will argue that this design can be read in terms of the architectural promenade. This is particularly evident in the development between the 1921 and 1922 versions.

Continuing Jeanneret's investigations of standardized dwelling and garden-city design, which extended back at least to 1914, the 1921 Citrohan type is presented in the *Œuvre complète* as a self-referential object (fig. 304)—a cubic volume with standardized floors in reinforced concrete, resting upon two lateral load-bearing walls of brick, stone, or masonry, adjusting to the specificity of traditional building systems and materials of distinct regions.<sup>1</sup> One senses a "primitive" quality extending back to classical Greece: the volume, opening at one end, evokes a traditional megaron emphatically anchored to the ground.<sup>2</sup>

In this initial version, an outer staircase links the surrounding space directly to the roof terrace. Functional efficiency can hardly explain why the staircase is placed outside. The archetype of the megaron, reverting to a Mediterranean past, suggests that this was Jeanneret's (too literal) attempt to imprint the experiential code of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1:31.

<sup>2</sup> On the resonance with the Mediterranean megaron see Frampton, "Le Corbusier and 'l'Esprit Nouveau,'" *Oppositions* no. 15-16 (Winter/Spring 1979), 21.

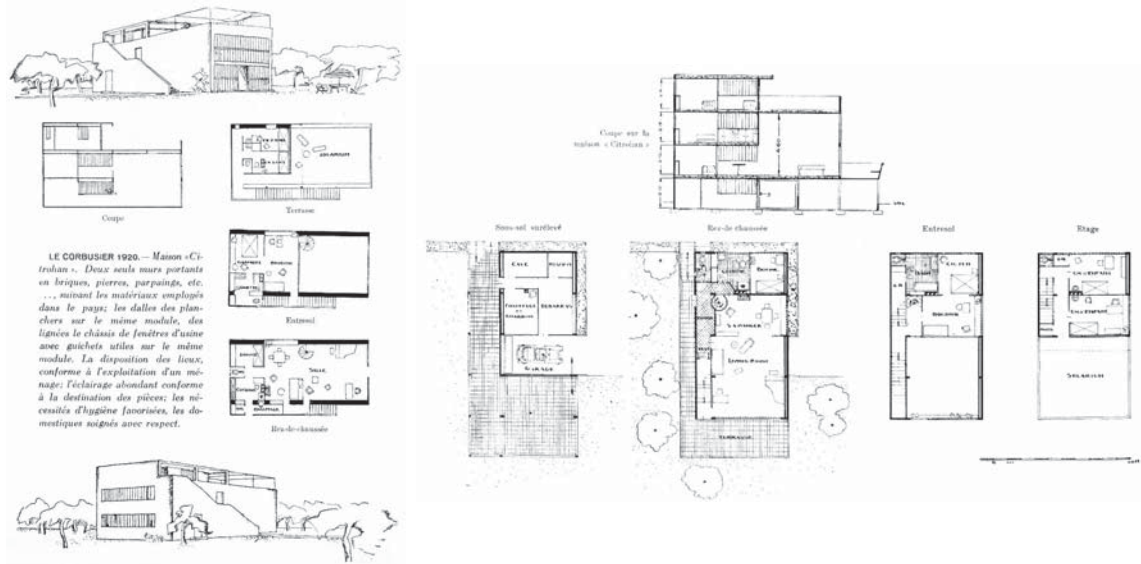


FIG. 304 Le Corbusier. Maison Citrohan, 1921.  
 FIG. 305 Le Corbusier. Maison Citrohan, 1922.

Acropolis on the prototype—the approach to a cubic volume, a meandering ascent, and the encounter with the landscape at the top along the architectural axis. Put simply, an unripe version of the Villa Savoye’s narrative.

The interior, a split-level studio space lit by the picture window, merges several references: the *chambre du tué* of the Jura farmhouse, the Parisian artist’s studio and its vernacular origins, a small restaurant at 32 rue Godot-de-Mauroy where Le Corbusier used to have lunch, and, for the large window, the factories’ glazed surfaces at the outskirts of Paris.<sup>3</sup> The inner spatiality explores the aesthetic value of the Platonic form. Also, we see how the scheme is about orienting the space along a guiding axis, recreating the experience of the Roman room that Jeanneret recognized in his *voyage d’Orient*—three full walls and a forth opening generously and letting the space participate in the ensemble. The cross-sections confirm the importance attached to orienting the space. The double-height living room and projecting balcony above are axially arranged and directed outwards. The glazed façade, acting like a proscenium, provides daily life with a privileged visual relationship to the exterior, merging the sense of being in a space and that of being-in-the-world, to return to Heidegger’s terminology.<sup>4</sup>

3 For the Jura farmhouse see chap. 4 of this work; for the artist’s studio and its vernacular origins see Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960; repr., Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1980), 214–219, esp. 217; on the bistro at 32 rue Godot-de-Mauroy and the Parisian factories see Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1:31.

4 “La coupe d’un édifice est le moule même de son esprit: dans un linéament gravé comme dans de l’acier, le sort des volumes est renfermé. Le plan d’un édifice est l’emprise de l’homme sur l’espace. On parcourt le plan à pied; les yeux regardent devant, la perception est successive, elle implique le temps; elle est une suite d’événements visuels, comme une Symphonie est une suite d’événements sonores. Le temps, la durée, la succession, la continuité sont les facteurs constituants de l’architecture, — ce qui annule et condamne ‘les plans en étoile’, et par conséquent dénonce des siècles de décadence et de dégénérescence. Plan et coupe font l’architecture sœur de la musique... L’architecture scelle l’alliance de l’homme et de la nature par la géométrie réglée sur les lois de l’univers.” Le Corbusier, “Unité,” 44–45.





FIG. 306 Le Corbusier. Immeuble-villas, 1922.

Like in the bistro at rue Godot-de-Mauroy, the main entrance gives access directly to the double-height space. The internal temporal experience is simple: one enters and finds the axial view after turning backwards. However, the scheme of the split-level “Roman room” entails a latent inner promenade developing from the smaller low-ceiling spaces to the large high-ceiling living room, axially oriented outwards. The axial orientation is emphasized by the transitions between spaces, which always take place along the main axis.

In 1922, sketching on the back of a restaurant’s menu, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret drew the Immeuble-Villas.<sup>5</sup> They did this by inserting the Citrohan cell into a large multi-storey structure. In the same year, both the Immeuble-Villas—integrated in the Ville Contemporaine—and a new version of the Citrohan house were exhibited at the Salon d’Automne in Paris.

This 1922 version of the Citrohan house incorporates Jeanneret’s earlier studies of the Dom-ino system and “Villes-pilotis.” While the “Villes-pilotis” concern the functional stratification of the city, the Dom-ino system is an expression of the ideal column-and-slab construction system synthesizing the rationalist (technical) and idealist (aesthetic) components of Jeanneret’s thinking.<sup>6</sup> The load-bearing walls of the 1921 Citrohan version are replaced by a post and slab structure, raising the house above the ground. This expands the functional stratification of the interior, which

<sup>5</sup> Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, 92.

<sup>6</sup> On the rationalist and idealist conjunction in the Dom-ino system see Turner, *Education of Le Corbusier*, 122-127; idem., “Romanticism, Rationalism, and the Domino System,” in *The Open Hand*, 14-41. For “Les Villes-pilotis” see Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 45. As noted by von Moos, this project is dated 1915, but in *L’Esprit nouveau* it is signed “Le Corbusier-Saugnier,” suggesting a later date. See Le Corbusier-Saugnier, “Trois rappels à MM. les architectes, le plan,” *L’Esprit nouveau* no. 4 (January 1921): 468; von Moos, *Elements of a Synthesis*, 330n4.

places the bedrooms on the upper floors, and re-elaborates the equation technique/aesthetics, which gains particular expression in the outer columns—the pilotis—enhancing the Platonic form.<sup>7</sup>

Another difference is that Le Corbusier solved the functional inconsistency of the outer staircase of the former version by moving it to the interior, while adding a shorter external one to give access to the elevated entrance door. But again, function does not entirely explain the new design, which rather seems to explore an elaborated experience along the access (fig. 305). This is evident in the outer itinerary linking the side stairs to the front balcony, generating a meandering access that precedes and expands the inner ascending path ultimately leading to the roof-terrace, and that expresses it on the exterior.

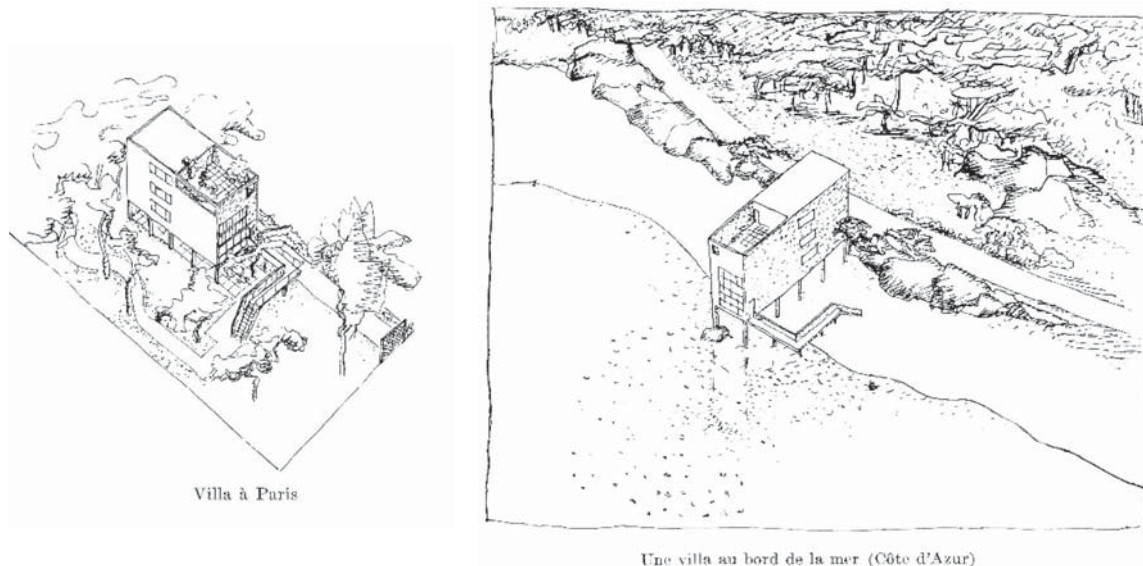
The range of intervening experiences provided by the interior is now part of the narrative developing from bottom to top, enriching the space experience of the split-level interior. By moving the main staircase to the inside, Le Corbusier could now explore the spatial qualities of the cubic space through the ascending promenade, creating a continuous dynamic experience of the crossed views through the double-height living room and upper balcony. And by raising the house, he could also improve the relationship between inner space and outer landscape.

Meanwhile, this broader narrative coexists with another one, latent in the split-level scheme of the first version. The main entrance, now on the side façade, generates an internal meandering sequence, from the cozy vestibule to the large high-ceiling living room. And from there one may continue until reaching the upper balcony. This seems to recreate the Acropolis's experiential code in a purely internal ascending promenade, combining a Romantic meandering narrative and the Classicist axial scheme.

The comparison between the 1921 and 1922 Citrohan versions thus suggests that the prototype can be read in terms of the promenade, and that the idea of promenade developed along with Le Corbusier's explorations of the equation technique/aesthetics. In the 1922 version, the technical and aesthetic qualities of the Dom-ino system combined with the archetypal experiential code of the Acropolis that we find in the version of 1921. And this helped Le Corbusier to evolve from a more literal interpretation of the experience of ancient Mediterranean architecture to a more refined association of aesthetic experience and promenade.

If we keep in mind this discussion of the Citrohan as a stand-alone house and then turn to Le Corbusier's architecture of the 1920s, we notice in it a repeated expres-

7 Note that in the contemporary design for the Immeubles-Villas, the dwellings at the street level indicate that the pilotis do not simply result from the alleged hygienic benefits that serve the argument of the five points—sun and the protection from the humidity (fig. 306).



**FIG. 307** Le Corbusier. Villa à Paris.  
**FIG. 308** Le Corbusier. Villa au bord de la mer.

sion of this ascending promenade. The outer ascending path is explored in different versions of the Citrohan (fig. 307-308), in the Ozenfant studio—where the exterior staircase intentionally expresses and expands the inner promenade leading to the top floor—, at Pessac, or even in the rear façade of the Villa Stein at Garches, where the projected terrace and stairs connect the open megaron to the garden. As for the internal promenade, we may find an association between the upper Citrohan balcony and the small library of the Ozenfant Studio or that of the La Roche house, meant to expand the mental vistas of their inhabitants.

If we now think of the Citrohan as a component unit of the Immeuble-Villas, we find a parallel between the outer path of the 1922 Citrohan house and the elaborated access along the galleries of the Immeuble-Villas. After the hallways and elevators, the promenade develops along the elevated galleries, then extends to the interior spatial sequence of the split-level scheme of each apartment, ultimately leading either to the double-height living room and front balcony or to the secluded garden of each of the cells—a private roof-garden (fig. 309). Writing of the Immeuble-Villas, Le Corbusier reminds us of the influence that the monastery of Ema exerted upon his dwelling designs. As I tried to show, Ema's impact on him was not only about the cell and its private garden, the duality individual/collective, and the tension between view and enclosure. It was also about the broader experience provided by the exquisite ascending access.<sup>8</sup> Through Ema, we can see the galleries of the Immeubles-Villas as a way to enrich the dwelling experience.

By the same token, we can also read the surrounding terrace-on-pilotis of the

<sup>8</sup> See Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, 91-92; chap. 2 of this work.

ative means of expression, opening “an entirely new field for the expansion of spatial imagination”; Oechslin, the foundation of a new synthesis of the Vitruvian classical triad, *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*.<sup>10</sup> Here, I would like to expand the debate on the Citrohan house, further suggesting that the gradual formulation of the Five Points goes side by side with the gradual formulation of Le Corbusier’s experiential code; and that, in using the Five Points to construct the promenade, Le Corbusier incorporates the promenade in them, together with practical, aesthetic, and technical factors.

The connection between the Five Points and the experiential and existential dimensions of architecture was not disavowed by Le Corbusier. In the first publication of the Five Points, in 1927, he enumerates the (then) six points as “pure technical research.” And yet, referring to his earlier formulation of the house as a *machine à habiter*, he criticizes its supporters for restricting the definition of architecture to a narrow reading of the formula. The *machine à habiter* won’t work if it fails to nourish the spirit, he stresses. Architecture encompasses an artistic component through which it responds to the existential needs of men, to the “constantes éternelles de l’âme humaine.” Architecture, he concludes, “is beyond the machine.”<sup>11</sup>

In order to exemplify how the promenade—the experiential dimension conceptualized in an ascending narrative pattern—and the Five Points developed side by side in direct relation to each other, one may return to the Citrohan house. Let us look at the 1921 version and focus on the roof garden.

The modern roof garden and its ancient Oriental historical roots were familiar to Le Corbusier at least since he worked with Perret and read Riat’s *L’Art des jardins*. Early inklings of it surface in the upper balconies of the 1915 Dom-ino houses, the roof terrace of the Villa Schwob, and several contemporary sketches. Beyond the alleged technical advantages, Le Corbusier advances two main arguments in the “Cinq Points”—the roof garden doubles the terrain and it is the most valuable place of the house.<sup>12</sup> In the 1921 Citrohan house, we have seen, this space and the experience associated with it resonate with their archetype—the Athenian Acropolis. This referent seems to underlie a later argument about the roof terrace in the Five Points: “Des raisons techniques, des raisons d’économie, des raisons de confort et des raisons sentimentales nous condui-

...

10 (October 1933), 19-28.

10 Giedion, “Le Corbusier and the contemporary means of architectural expression,” in *Le Corbusier: Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Tapestries*, exh. cat. (London: Whitefriars Press, 1958), 11-12. First published in the same year in the German catalogue as “Le Corbusier und die architektonischen Ausdrucksmittel dieser Zeit”; Oechslin, “Les Cinq Points,” 92-93.

11 Le Corbusier, “Où en est l’architecture?,” *L’Architecture Vivante* 5, no. 17 (Autumn/Winter 1927): 7-11. First published in *Europäische Revue* in 1 May 1927. In this version Le Corbusier still included the suppression of the cornice as a main point of the normative for modern architecture.

12 Le Corbusier, “Les cinq points,” ms., 1-2.

sent à adopter le toit-terrasse.”<sup>13</sup> Instead of “toit jardin,” Le Corbusier now speaks of “toit-terrasse.” Indeed, the “megaron” of the Citrohan house has a roof terrace, not a roof garden. When describing the first realization of the roof garden, in the *petite villa* in Vevey, Le Corbusier wrote: “On monte sur le toit. Plaisir qui fut celui de certaines civilisations à certaines époques ... Nous y voici ... les herbes sont rôties! Qu’importe! chaque brin porte ombre, et les racines serrées constituent un épais feutre isolant.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, the garden is secondary and has primarily a technical function. The important thing, extending back to ancient civilizations, is the secluded elevated space overlooking the landscape, where the inhabitant comes to terms with the world.

Thus understood, the roof garden included in the Five Points of 1927 owes at least as much to the formulation of a broader experiential dimension as it does to technical and aesthetic factors. This resurfaces in later cases such as the roof terraces in Marseilles or La Tourette, their parapets hiding the near surroundings and directing the gaze towards the far horizon, resonating with the Acropolis, the Pompeian temples, or the Rūsten Pasa Camii.

The interrelated maturation of the promenade and of another of the Five Points may be also detected in the 1922 Citrohan version: the pilotis. In raising the megaron above the ground, the pilotis allowed Le Corbusier to combine function (by moving the main stairs to the interior) and the outer expression of the ascending path, as we have seen. But they also enriched the inner experience of space, dynamically perceived along the stairs. Here, some of the vertical supports that replace the load-bearing walls are not embedded in the peripheral walls. Carried into the interior, the staircase develops between the peripheral wall and the loose columns, opening to the living room. This is a first manifestation of the aesthetic pleasure of moving between columns inside a Cartesian envelope.<sup>15</sup> This aspect is fully explored in the Villa Mayer or the Villa Savoye—two paradigmatic cases where the broader narrative structures the whole experience of architecture—and relates to another of the Five Points: the free floor plan.

The free floor plan provides the most obvious connection with the aesthetic experience of Le Corbusier’s architecture. Its technical roots are found in the independence of structural support and internal arrangement of the 1915 Dom-ino scheme. When discussing the five points more than a decade later, Le Corbusier illustrates the free plan with the second version for the Villa Meyer (fig. 310). A ramp constructs a continuous narrative from ground floor to roof terrace: Le Corbusier sees it as an example of the new independence between Cartesian envelope and inner free organs,

13 Le Corbusier, “Les Cinq points d’une architecture nouvelle,” in *Œuvre complète*, 1:128.

14 Le Corbusier, *Une Petite maison* (Zurich: Girsberger, 1954), 45.

15 Note that when describing “Les Villes-pilotis” Le Corbusier wrote on the pilotis as a “forêt de piliers ordonnée.” Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 45.



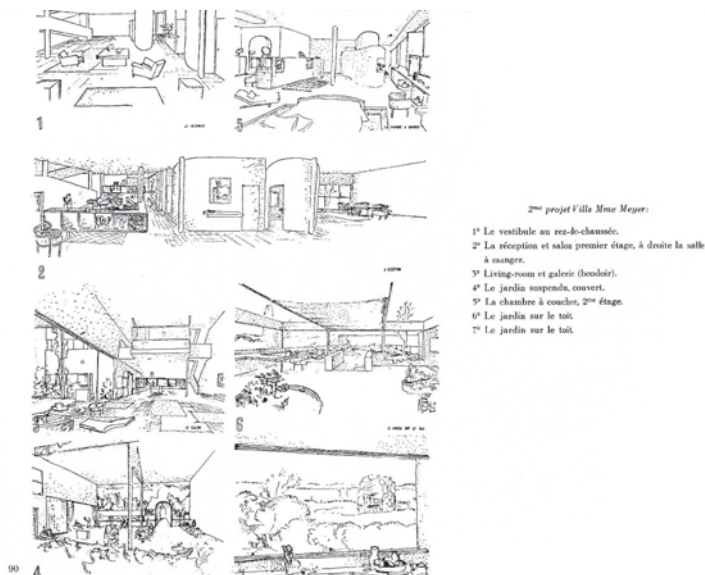


FIG. 310 Le Corbusier. Villa Meyer. Second version, 1925.

made possible by the new structural system. The free plan is compared with both the machine—suggesting its technical and practical advantages—and with the “Gothic healthy joy.”<sup>16</sup>

Two main concepts are involved in this view of the free plan, space-form (the envelope) and volume-form (the freestanding columns and partitions inside the envelope). The notion of space-form and its connections with the promenade relate to the experiences of the Green Mosque, the Pompeian house, and even the French *hôtel*. Its ultimate expression is perhaps the La Roche house and the experience along the sequential space-forms and crossed views of its assembled cubic spaces. The interaction of space-form and volume-form, in turn, is rooted in Jeanneret’s experience of the Turkish multi-domed mosques—particularly the Ulu Camii—and of Pisa. But it also seems to relate to the Gothic and its spatiotemporal experience. For Le Corbusier’s association between the notion of free organs and the “Gothic healthy joy” suggests that he was thinking of the feelings of prospect and expanse sparked by columnar architecture through which he had interpreted Notre-Dame.

Le Corbusier thus seems to have evolved from an initial technical interest for moveable partitions in the Dom-ino scheme to the aesthetic exploration of the interplay of volume and space. And the Citrohan house was a turning point in this evolution, merging the notions of space and volume, associated to columnar architecture and to the ascending promenade, ultimately resolving the inner tension up in the ter-

16 “Les escaliers sont devenus des organes libres, etc., etc. Partout, les organes se sont caractérisés, sont devenus libres les uns à l’égard des autres ... le plan délivré des compromis du classicisme (Les Louis et la Haute-Renaissance) a retrouvé l’allègre santé gothique, le rationalisme gothique. Mais cela en des modalités nouvelles. Un jour nous avons remarqué que la maison pouvait être comme l’auto : une enveloppe simple contenant à l’état de liberté des organes libres infiniment multiples.” Le Corbusier, “Où en est l’architecture?,” 21-24.

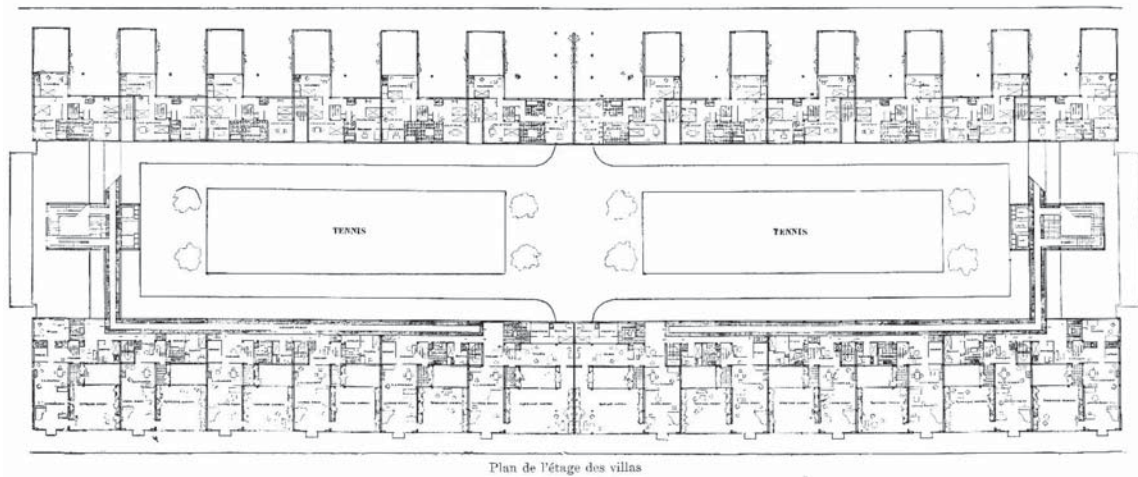


FIG. 309 Le Corbusier. Immeuble-villas. Plan, 1922.

1922 Citrohan house, with the megaron rising above it, as an attempt to incorporate the Carthusian model into the prototype, expanding the ascending narrative and the privileged relationship between interior space and landscape. Simultaneously, the raised volume— independent from the specificities of the terrain— together with the idea of a standardized house designed and produced like a car or a ship’s cabin, brings our mind back to the Semperian notion of directionality, its links with man’s *will*, and with the Athenian Acropolis, experienced through the dialectics of prospect and expanse.

It seems therefore reasonable to argue that, among the many factors affecting the design of the Citrohan house, the architectural promenade is a central theme, both in its conception and in the evolution of its different versions, and that is associated with the intent to merge practical circulation, aesthetic enjoyment of space, and contemplation of the landscape into one comprehensive lived experience.

**THE FIVE POINTS** The Citrohan type is one episode in the *recherche patiente* that would lead Le Corbusier to formulate the “five points for a new architecture” in 1927—the pilotis, the roof garden, the free floor plan, the ribbon window, and the free façade. Crystallized on the occasion of the Weissenhof exhibition in Stuttgart, this normative statement is, as Le Corbusier himself stated, the culmination of a long elaboration that extends back to the Dom-ino system and that embodies a “réaction esthétique fondamentale.”<sup>9</sup> Giedion saw in it the transformation of a technical process into a cre-

<sup>9</sup> Le Corbusier, “Les Cinq points d’une architecture nouvelle,” ms., 24 July 1927, published in Oechslin, “Les Cinq Points d’une Architecture Nouvelle,” *Assemblage* no. 4 (October 1987): 82–93. Even after this formulation, Le Corbusier would continue to rework the formula, as can be seen when, in 1933, the strip window is replaced by the “independent structure” (*l’ossature indépendante*). See Le Corbusier, “Les 5 POINTS d’une ARCHITECTURE NOUVELLE CONSÉQUENCE DES TECHNIQUES MODERNES,” in “Le Corbusier & Pierre Jeanneret,” special issue, *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* no.

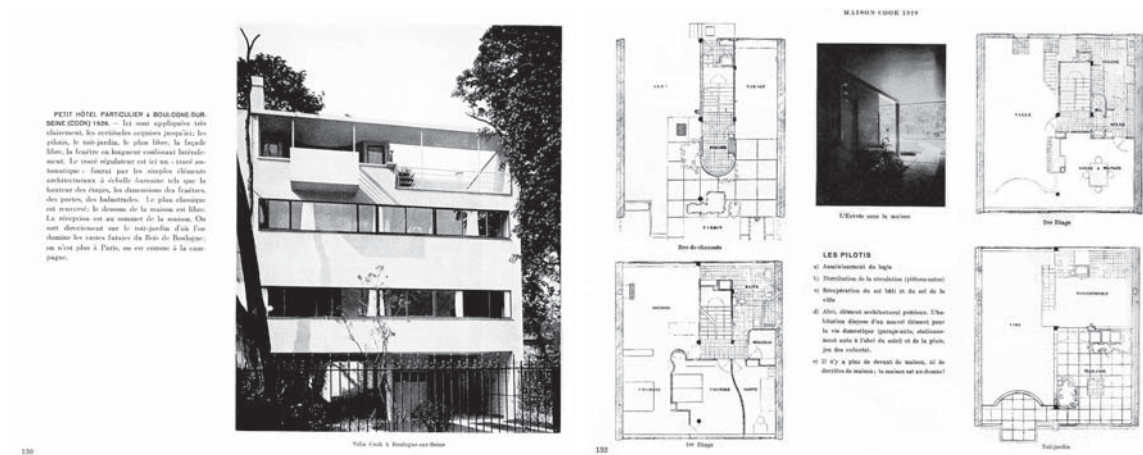


FIG. 311 Le Corbusier. Villa Cook, 1926. Front façade. Page from *Œuvre Complète*.  
 FIG. 312 Le Corbusier. Villa Cook, 1926. Plans and entry level. Page from *Œuvre Complète*.

race. Again, this indicates that the concept of the free plan developed side by side with the aesthetic enjoyment of space associated with the ascending narrative.

One must not expect to find a direct relationship between each of the Five Points and the architectural promenade. But the Villa Savoye, the mature work of the 1920s, illustrates the extent to which the promenade is engaged in the aesthetic and emotional experience provided by the Five Points. This resurfaces, for instance, in *Architectures d'aujourd'hui*, a 1931 documentary that Le Corbusier co-wrote with Pierre Chenal. The scenes of the Villa Savoye–François Penz has observed–explore the symbolic dimension of Eisensteinian montage, translating the Five Points into cinematographic language. A parenthesis into the enunciation of the Five Points is set up in the ramp, where, with the introduction of a human figure, the cinematographic language adopts the logic of a fictional narrative in order to introduce the notion of *promenade architecturale*.<sup>17</sup> This dialogue between two different kinds of montage illustrates the close links between the Five Points and the promenade.

These links are expressed in Le Corbusier's own words. In the 1934 description of the villa, in the *Œuvre complète*, the architectural promenade structures Le Corbusier's narrative, qualifying the spatial and formal implications of the Five Points. These are seen as the means to achieve the final goal of architecture: its aesthetic experience. The variety, unexpected and even surprising aspects of the narrative are enabled by the free plan and enhanced by their contrast with the rigor of the Cartesian structure. Technique and function are evaluated in terms of the resulting aesthetic enjoyment. The free plan provides a free dynamic experience, formalized in an ascending pattern towards the roof terrace, while the free façades with their wide windows secure a per-

17 François Penz, "L'Ombre de l'Acropole : La Villa Savoye construite par le cinéma," in *L'Invention d'un architecte*, 407-413.

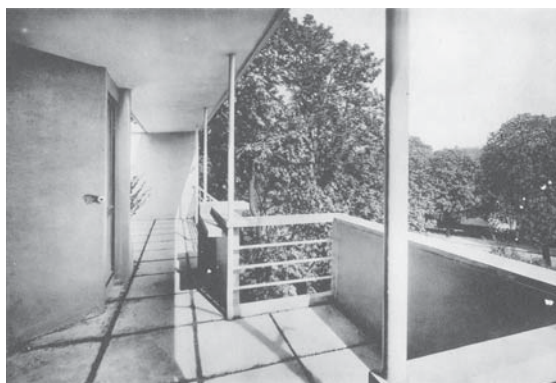


FIG. 313 Le Corbusier. Villa Cook, 1926. Top floor. View towards the terrace.

FIG. 314 Le Corbusier. Villa Cook, 1926. Terrace and projecting balcony.

manent view over the surrounding nature.<sup>18</sup>

**THE PROMENADE AND THE FIVE POINTS: A REFORMULATION OF EXPERIENCE** I would now like to draw the five points together as a reformulation of experience, restricting my comments to the analysis of a paradigmatic example, the Maison Cook.

Arguing that a concern with French cultural identity led Le Corbusier to explore the model of the eighteenth-century French *hôtel* in the Maison Cook, Etlin has seen connections between the traditional *hôtel* and three of the five points, the free plan, free façade and ribbon window. The free plan enables the varied geometrical shapes associated with the composition by means of *poché*, and is concerned with circulation and aesthetic enjoyment. The free façade and ribbon window, in turn, reflect, on the one hand, the dichotomy between a neutral exterior façade and a varied interior and, on the other hand, the autonomous composition of the façades—according to a new synthesis of the Vitruvian classical triad, as noted by Oechslin.<sup>19</sup> Etlin’s comparison between the five points and the French *hôtel* can be further expanded if we keep in mind Le Corbusier’s ordering code.

Like the Villa Stein, the Villa Cook calls upon the model of the French *hôtel* to accommodate the house to a narrow lot, re-elaborating the fundamental temporal experience of “la marche” (fig. 311-314). The *corps de logis* is set back from the street, generating a *cour d’honneur*. But whereas in the French *hôtel* and in the Villa Stein this sequence is extended through the interior until reaching the rear garden, in the Villa Cook the axis turns vertical once under the volume raised by the pilotis, generating the sequence *cour d’honneur*, inner space, roof garden. “Il n’y a plus de devant de maison,

18 Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 2:24. Partially quoted in the introductory chapter of this work, n1.

19 Etlin, *Romantic Legacy*, 121-25.



ni de derrière de maison; la maison est au-dessus!”<sup>20</sup> In the interior, the vertical stratification that we saw in the Citrohan house is inverted, placing the bedrooms below and the split-level space of the megaron at the upper levels. Developing from the ground level to the roof terrace, the villa proposes a comprehensive narrative, re-elaborating the narrative of the French *hôtel* within the structure of Le Corbusier’s ordering code, implicating the remaining two of the five points, the pilotis and the roof garden. Not surprisingly, the *Œuvre complète* introduces the Villa Cook as a “Petit hôtel particulier” and it immediately follows with the enunciation of the five points, of which the villa is seen as a practical application.

A typical example of Le Corbusier’s working method that Colquhoun has termed “displacement of concepts,” this reinterpretation of the French *hôtel* goes beyond French cultural identity: it involves Le Corbusier’s ordering code and its links with the ideal of a global culturally renewed society. The Five Points and the *promenade architecturale* are intimately associated in the conceptual principles of the house. And these are ultimately rooted in his first architectural design: the projecting balcony of the Maison Cook, I suggested, condenses the expression of the law of meander and the “regard horizontal,” echoing the advance and retreat of planes of the south façade of the Villa Fallet.<sup>21</sup>

This brief survey of the Citrohan type and of the five points illuminates how technical factors and practical arguments combine with aesthetic and existential experience in Le Corbusier’s Romantic project. To use the words of Giorgio Agamben, who has been more recently probing into the relationship between language and experience, Le Corbusier understood that “any rigorous formulation of the question of experience inevitably impacts on the question of language.”<sup>22</sup> Jeanneret saw architecture as a language deeply revealing: “L’architecture est un langage profondément révélateur,” he wrote.<sup>23</sup> Le Corbusier, like any other artist of the modern aesthetic revolution, was searching for a primordial language; and this quest entails the formulation of an ontological experience, which he thought of in terms of a meaningful experiential narrative capable of enacting a philosophical world-view. The Maison Citrohan, Le Corbusier himself stated, proposes not only a structural distributional and aesthetic type, but also a moral attitude.<sup>24</sup> As Tafuri has put it, Le Corbusier anticipated Heidegger in see-

<sup>20</sup> Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1:132.

<sup>21</sup> See “Theoretical Frameworks,” in chap. 1 of this work.

<sup>22</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London and New York: Verso, 2007), 44.

<sup>23</sup> Jeanneret, “La Maison suisse,” *Étrennes helvétiques - almanach illustré*, 1914.

<sup>24</sup> About the 1922 version of the Maison Citrohan Le Corbusier wrote: “C’est ici la continuation de la première étude de 1920 ... Stuttgart: c’est l’occasion enfin! On présente là un *type* : un type de structure, un type de disposition intérieure, une proposition de réforme du mobilier, une plastique catégorique du ciment armé, une esthétique franche. A cette



ing technology as poetic in essence, a *poiesis* that reconciles technology with myth.<sup>25</sup>

Noting that theoretical projects such as the Dom-ino housing scheme relate to real sites and occasions, Jean-Louis Cohen has recently noted that the division of Le Corbusier's work into the projects that are specific to their sites and those that are not is largely artificial.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the crux of the problem is not site specificity, but the creation of an encompassing system or ordering code, capable of enacting a fundamental relationship with the landscape independently of its specificities—a *mediating machine* structuring this relationship by means of a daily ritual, a “geste essentiel.”

#### THE ACCORD WITH THE AXIS: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the preceding pages, it has only been possible to give some suggestion of how Le Corbusier's work and thought may have been influenced by the experiential concerns which I examine in this work. To fully understand the links between his architecture and the aesthetic, emotional and temporal experience of the architectural promenade would require additional research that is beyond the scope of this study—such as a comprehensive study of Le Corbusier's works and writings, and their links with the period between the journey to the East and the 1920s. In focusing on the roots of the architectural promenade, understood as a broader ordering code, this work tries to demonstrate that the concept played a central role in Jeanneret's early education, that it was overlaid and enriched by other themes and concepts that he absorbed soon after, and that it had deep consequences in Le Corbusier's later work.

That Le Corbusier would transpose his concerns into an ordering code, conceptualized as a narrative pattern, is not surprising. In his search for essentials, he insistently strove to synthesize complexity into universal rules and solutions. This is why, in his Parisian enthusiasm for Gothic architecture, his devotion to Notre-Dame so obviously contrasts with an apparent apathy towards the great cathedrals of northern France—which, as noted by Brooks, were easily accessible by train<sup>27</sup>; or why, after visiting the Parthenon in 1911, he seems to have felt that his planned visit to Paestum had lost its purpose. The major example of a historical model was all he needed to identify the principles and draw out of them a set of rules with universal value. The Five Points arise from a similar reductive process. And so does the three-step narrative pattern

manifestation s'attache une attitude morale.” Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1:45.

<sup>25</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, “Machine et Mémoire,” 210.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, “In the Cause of Landscape,” in *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes*, ed. Cohen (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2013), 27–28; On the Dom-ino system see also Talamona, “Dom-ino Italie,” in *L'Italia di Le Corbusier*, ed. Talamona (Milan: Electa, 2012), 163–173.

<sup>27</sup> Brooks, *Formative Years*, 177–78.

of his experiential code, the *promenade architecturale*. The promenade crystallizes a metaphysical world-view into a paradigmatic physical lived experience—an experience that both integrates man in his surroundings and affirms his will's control.

The cardinal statement of this deep connection between the physical and the metaphysical is perhaps the 1922 essay “Architecture III. Pure creation de l'esprit,” describing the experience of an axial accord between man and the world, mediated by a properly oriented architecture. The human body, Le Corbusier claims, is organized according to an axis, the same along which all phenomena and objects of nature align. This axis expresses “a unifying management in the universe,” a “single will at the origin.” Man senses “organization” in the natural objects and in the results of experiment and calculation because they are all aligned with the axis. Harmony may thus be defined as “a return to the general order” through a “moment of accord with the axis.” The Athenian Acropolis provides the archetype: emotion comes from a certain accord between categorical architectural elements and the site, defining “a unity of intention” and a single thought. Because this organization is without ambiguity, “we can read, know, and feel the accord.” Therefore, the work of art must have a “driving unity” (*unité motrice*), just as the objects of nature and the results of calculations are animated by a “unity of driving intention” (*unité d'intention motrice*). In sum, “Art is poetry: emotion of the senses, the joy of a mind that measures and appreciates, the recognition of an axial principle that affects the core of our being.”<sup>28</sup>

The guiding axis is therefore integrative in a number of ways. It orders architecture but surpasses it, uniting man, architecture and the natural phenomena in a common order and comprehensive experience. In this work I propose that, bearing the impulse of a unifying “motor intention,” the axis and the single will and thought associated with it entail an active participation, an embodied and mental experience concluded by a final moment of accord: the bird's eye view, providing the synthesis of the natural and the manmade, or the ritual ascent towards the secluded high vantage point of the dwelling. The bird's eye view is provided by the plane—“Tomorrow we shall all go in planes”<sup>29</sup>—and expounded in *Aircraft*. With the plane, “the eye now sees in substance what the mind formerly could only subjectively conceive,” he wrote, “the flight of a plane provides a spectacle with a lesson—a philosophy ... The non-professional who flies ... becomes meditative: he can take refuge only in himself and in his own works,” and once man “has come down to earth his aims and determinations have found a new

28 Le Corbusier-Saugnier, “Pure création de l'esprit,” 1903-1920. Le Corbusier retakes the theme of the Acropolis and the axial accordance with the site in Le Corbusier, *New World of Space* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock and Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1948), where, significantly, he also enunciates the “Five Points.” See also his “New World of Space. Inefable Space,” *Horizon. A Review of Literature and Art* no. 106 (October 1948): 279-284.

29 Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 101.

scale ... One can be lulled and reassured by saying to oneself that in spite of everything a stirring unity will come to prevail by degrees.”<sup>30</sup> As for the daily ascending ritual, the best example is perhaps the elaborated access to Le Corbusier’s own apartment on top of the apartment building in the rue Nungesser-et-Coli: a meandering ascent along a rhythmic play of spatial oppositions, obstacles, and changing directions, starting with a ramp next to the entrance at street level and ending with the roof garden or the raised bed overlooking the landscape above the balcony’s parapet, like the bed he designed for his parents in the 1912 Maison Blanche.

This meaningful ritual leading to the “moment of accord with the axis,” offered daily to the inhabitant in his own dwelling, qualifies, I believe, the core of Le Corbusier’s architectural experience and of the broader concept of “architectural promenade.” If he barely used the term to qualify his works, it is precisely because the concept surpasses the term and, being deeply embedded in his thought, it dissolves into the variety of factors that inform his work—perhaps strangely for us, removed as we are from the Romantic ideal. Blanc wrote that a monument should be the expression of a religion or a nation and should therefore exclude the relative, the individual values, and the ephemeral in order to attain the necessary unity which is essential to manifest the universal sentiment. Built upon the Romantic legacy, each of Le Corbusier’s houses, housing blocks and even cities are, in a sense, a monument meant to lift man to a higher condition, seeking to give presence to the pantheistic immanence of Nature and to disclose the Absolute via the phenomenal.

The fact that the major argument of this work—that what can broadly be termed as the architectural promenade is a manifestation of Le Corbusier’s code of ordering spaces and organizing the world, through which he invested them with a symbolic dimension and meaningful experience, merging the everyday life with a comprehensive experience of the natural and the manmade—has never been fully accomplished in Le Corbusier’s idealistic urban plans, does not prevent us from experiencing either the bodily sense of space or the sense of being-in-the-world in the forms of his buildings, their interior spaces, and roof terraces. Think of, say, the *unité* in Marseille, its powerful raised volume set against the sky, the cozy oriented spaces of its cells, and the expanding roof terrace overlooking the sea and the mountains. Nor does our skepticism about a unified renewed society prevent us from experiencing the conjunction of these emotions. Think of the house for his parents at Vevey and the corollaries of this study—that for Le Corbusier “circulation” is never devoid of meaning and that architecture acts as a *mediating machine*. In Vevey, the practical requirements for our daily life are satisfied, the small dimensions and architectural forms enact our bodily

30 Le Corbusier, *Aircraft*, 5, fig. 96, 122.

sense of space, and the presence of the lake and mountain ridge beyond the ribbon window sparks our sense of being-in-the-world. It is because we sense the merging of these emotions in a single experience, I believe, that when visiting the *petite villa* we all secretly dream of inhabiting it. In this respect, Le Corbusier accomplished his quest for “eternal truths.” The powerful experience that his buildings provide us with, today, is perhaps the best testimony of their timeliness.

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