

From Ruins to the Ruins of Ruins

The Challenging Afterlife of Architectural Dereliction

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Many things can be labelled as ruins, and interpreted with regard to their status as being or having been destroyed in one way or another, thus displaying the physical effects and aesthetic results of decay.

Think of gothic churches with crumbling walls, classical Greek and Roman temples with broken columns and parts of their tympana fallen on the ground, derelict factory buildings, slowly decaying sites of former Olympic games, entire cities annihilated by nuclear weapons, edifices that have entered a state beyond repairability and are unable to resist natural forces like earthquakes and tsunamis, fake ruins in English-style landscape gardens, and archaeological sites and antique buildings destroyed forcefully by terrorist attacks as a conscious and violent act of cancelling the physical remnants of earlier cultures, civilisations, and religions.

All of the above – and many other things not mentioned here that nevertheless bear the signs of destruction – are habitually labelled as ruins in everyday discourse. And all can have various interesting aspects for the non-specialised public, for those investigating theoretical issues in aesthetics, and also for practicing artists. What is more, these various forms of ruination do not even require ‘exclusivity’: the same artist can become interested in various forms and manifestations of decay, from more ‘natural’ ones to those caused by intentional human activity, including wars – as we can see, for example, in the great series by the photographer Gabriele Basilico examining diverse forms of ruins and ruination in Rome, Istanbul, Beirut, and other cities.¹

Although the term ‘ruin’ may work for general designation, immediately we feel that it is not only imprecise but even misleading to put such diverse forms of dereliction as those I briefly listed above on the same platform and in the same category, and it prevents us from seeing the individual characteristics and particular features of these phenomena properly. Therefore, in this chapter I would like to start by attempting to define classical ruins, establishing them as

1 See for example: Piranesi – Roma – Basilico: Incisione di Giambattista Piranesi e fotografie di Gabriele Basilico. Roma: Contrasto 2019; Gabriele Basilico: Istanbul 05 010. Mantova: Corraini Edizioni 2010.

the point of origin in the imaginary coordinate system of ruins, which will then enable us to observe and understand not only some of the multiple forms of their afterlives, but also their relevance and challenges today.

As I described in some earlier works, including a recent monograph on the aesthetics of ruins, I find three aspects or criteria essential for the definition of classical ruins: functionlessness, absence, and time.² *Functionlessness* refers to the fact that, at the start of the ruination process, a building has lost its original function, and it has neither been restored nor had a new function allocated to it – hence a still-functioning building cannot be considered a proper ruin. *Absence*, as perhaps the most characteristic and immediately perceivable feature, refers to the former building's lack of elements – walls have zigzag contours, the ceiling is partly missing, hence the strong difference between interior and exterior is blurred, etc. – and in many cases these lacunae contribute strongly to the ruin's aesthetic charm, since we may particularly enjoy the random and picturesque beauty caused by the slow destructive forces of Nature. As a matter of fact, this is how we arrive at the third criterion, that of *time*: in the case of classical ruins – or, we could also say: in the classical cases of ruination – there is a significant difference between the ruin's temporal trajectory and that of the viewer. This is what allows the visitor to experience the sublimity of the passing (of) time that is aesthetically manifested in the ruin, as it is slowly but unstopably shaped by Nature.

The features and appeal of original and genuine ruins – as well as the importance of the originality and genuineness of ruins – may likewise be interpreted using a 'reversed chronology', by looking at the other end and investigating some of their possible afterlives. This approach is apposite also because classical ruins (just like any other buildings) are not fixed: they do not stay *the way* they are, and in certain cases do not even stay *where* they are. This clarifies why, when ruminating on the afterlives of ruins, we need to take into consideration several possible outcomes.

What we could call the 'natural' afterlife of classical ruins is their slow disappearance. If an old building has lost its function, it starts to crumble, the void on its body continuously grows: the incessant destructive activity of the forces of Nature constantly changes the proportions of the still standing elements and of the already disappeared parts. Then, after a significant amount of time, we arrive to a point when there is practically nothing left of the original. This explains why – as I have discussed in my work – ruins also have a particular lifespan that ranges from being not-yet-ruin to becoming not-anymore-ruin.

Most of the classical ruins that we normally encounter – and that we label aesthetically pleasing ruins, at least as seen from a Western perspective and in accordance with Western aesthetic ideals – are either in some stage within this

2 Zoltán Somhegyi: *Reviewing the Past: The Presence of Ruins*. London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield International 2020; see also Zoltán Somhegyi: *Layers of the Past: On the Potential of Ruins*. In: Max Rynnänen and Zoltán Somhegyi: *Learning from Decay: Essays on the Aesthetics of Architectural Dereliction and its Consumption*. Berlin: Peter Lang 2018.

lifespan of the ruin, or their ruination has been intentionally stopped at a particular point. This latter case can include the mere conservation of the actual state in which the building was found at the time when a decision was made to conserve it – that is, not letting Nature to destroy it anymore but also not adding anything to it; of course this may include some minimal static fixing and/or making the ruin safe to visit, etc. However, more significant conservation and restoration or even reconstruction processes can also be applied, which naturally have further consequences on the appearance, authenticity, and aesthetic effect of the ruin.³

Beyond these more common and straightforward cases, let us look at two completely opposing forms of the afterlife of ruins that may, in many aspects, be considered the remotest ends of the scale on which it is possible to register all the other forms of natural survival and interventional managing of ruins. Hopefully these considerations will not only shed some further light on the mere theoretical and aesthetic implications of architectural dereliction, but will also contribute some thoughts to be taken into account when practical questions regarding the management of sites are to be decided.⁴

The first of the two cases we can call the ruin of ruins. It is the forceful and intentional eradication of classical ruins, a complete clearance, executed by fanatic followers of extreme ideologies. A typical and recent example of this is the destruction of the archaeological sites of Palmyra by the ‘Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’ (ISIS) in 2015. This case of demolition is not the only example, but it became overtly known ‘thanks’ to the terrorist group itself, which used images of the devastation in a consciously planned propaganda strategy. The strategy was quite ‘efficient’, in the sense that it caused an international uproar on one side, while on the other side, and in a terrible way, it served to highlight the gruesome determination of the fanatics that may have been a lure for some still wanting to join the group. It was thus a demonstration of power for an obviously extremely short-sighted and fanatical agenda.

But let us stop here for a moment: does it not sound a bit strange that the terrorist group decided to exercise and demonstrate their power on the remains of ancient edifices? Why does it seem ‘dangerous’ to let the remnants stay as they are? Why waste time, energy, and expensive explosive material for the eradication of seemingly harmless monuments without strategic military function? The reason for this is that, however strange it may sound, ruins have power: their continued existence reminds us of the original building and its era, and this can naturally be very disturbing for those who want to do away with the memory of the previous cultures and/or religions of a region. This also makes what I was referring to above understandable: the activity of ISIS is only one of the most recent – and sadly too-well-documented – eradications of ruins, but

3 Many of these aspects were analysed in detail in Carolyn Korsmeyer’s volume: Carolyn Korsmeyer: *Things: In Touch with the Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019.

4 Some of the ideas summarised in the next few paragraphs have been developed more in detail in Chapter 11 of my aforementioned book: Somhegyi 2020 (see note 2), pp. 197–213.

the whole process is interpretable as a modern form of iconoclasm and *damnatio memoriae* – a practice with a long history that can be traced back to antiquity.⁵

There are, however, two things that may seem somewhat different this time. One is – and, in fact, this was highlighted in many of the texts and comments on the political, social, and cultural consequences of the terrorists’ destruction – that the documentation and the spreading of the terrible images of the eradication of ruins also served the very purposes of the group. The aforementioned ‘international uproar’, even if it was right – from the perspective of those who care for the magnificent monuments inherited from the past – contributed to the aims of these terrible actions and of the terrorist group itself. Obviously this does not mean that the professional international media or the users of social media should not have talked about these actions. But it means that we were, and we are, in a very delicate situation when it comes to *how* we should talk and/or report on such cases. Every ‘share’ of the images spread not only the mere ‘news’ of the cruel action itself but also, involuntarily, the cruel message too; hence it would have been, and still is, extremely crucial to properly contextualise the visual (and textual) report of any such action.

The other aspect worth mentioning with regard to this recent destruction is again connected to the temporal perspectives and aesthetic qualities of the very object to be destroyed. Unlike many cases of previous forms of political and religious iconoclasm and of *damnatio memoriae*, the activity of ISIS was not directed to the immediate recent past. In the Byzantine iconoclasm, the actual religious (and, in a way, political and economic) system was targeted, just like, for example, in the French Revolution or in the first post-Soviet years when symbols of the system and monuments of the preceding leaders were destroyed. In the case of the ISIS destruction, however, the target was not the immediate past. ISIS did not try to destroy the palace or the sculptural monument of a recently dethroned ruler, but it referred to a significantly earlier culture from thousands of years ago – and to its silent monuments that had been venerated for their artistic qualities as being exemplary representatives of an aesthetic and architectural canon, often appreciated in a way that was practically independent of the cultural context. The Graeco-Roman built heritage has been investigated and regularly re-used in later architecture globally, and its influence is still palpable today. Therefore, the aesthetic remnants of Palmyra, for example, signified and incorporated something much broader for the terrorists: they were iconic objects, and thus of strategic (though not military) importance in their cultural war, not merely a site that just happened to be there to be destroyed. And, referring to my considerations above, given that in the case of classical ruins we appreciate the tremendous passage of time represented in the aesthetically pleasing form of ruins, it is easy to see why we cannot talk about anything like this regarding the

5 See Dieter Metzler: *Bilderstürme und Bilderfeindlichkeit in der Antike*. In: Martin Warnke (ed.): *Bildersturm: Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks*. Munich: Carl Hanser 1973, pp. 14–29. The same volume includes examinations of iconoclasm from other historical periods too. See also Paolo Matthiae: *Distruzioni, saccheggi e rinascite: Gli attacchi al patrimonio artistico dall'antichità all'Isis*. Milan: Mondadori Electa 2015.

shattered archaeological monuments in Palmyra. They were reduced to debris in an instant, even after they had strongly resisted several millennia of slow ruination. With their explosion, the followers of ISIS attempted to delete their ability to continue playing an influential role in contemporary culture, and with this the terrorists aimed at grasping the power of this influence, wanting to be talked about and thereby seen in their own right as the new influencers of the formation of culture.

Here is how we arrive at the opposite and thus completely different form of the afterlife of ruins: when architectural remnants and sculptural fragments are carefully unearthed, secured, collected, and transported to be installed in museums of nearby cities or of distant lands. Needless to say, this is an incomparably better form of afterlife than the complete destruction explained above, because in this way we have access to the original pieces, whatever is available (or was available at the time of the archaeological exploration).

Over the last more than two hundred years, this process has received very diverse evaluations that range from celebrating the saving, care, and display (often free-to-visit display) of the remnants to strong critical voices advocating for restitution. Here I do not want to go into the details of these questions; instead, I would like to mention another aspect – one that is connected to the aesthetic consequences of such displays. Through the collection, transport, and re-establishment inside a museum, the ruin's organic connection with its original physical environment is severed, and naturally this essentially influences the aesthetic effect of the remnants. Having de-rooted the surviving architectural pieces, we can of course save these pieces *physically* – and in many cases today we would be extremely grateful if this had happened to the monuments that were ultimately destroyed in their original locations – but the perception of their organic embeddedness in their genuine context will obviously be harmed.⁶ In a museum space we cannot fully reconstruct how the building looked on the spot, what effect it had in that particular landscape, seen from far away and close up, on the top of a hill or in the middle of other buildings' remnants, etc. Seeing from this perspective, the de-contextualised ruin will not really be a ruin anymore – or will not be a real ruin anymore – and this will of course influence its interpretation and aesthetic appeal, too.

To illustrate this, we can claim that, *mutatis mutandis*, it is similar to the case when a site-specific contemporary art piece, for example an earth art work, is re-installed and shown in a gallery. Since such a work of art was first conceptualised as an interaction with the actual environment (often using the natural materials found there), when transported and re-exhibited in a sterile white-cube gallery space, it will have a different effect. Granted, in this latter case we need to leave the possibility open for some special instances, in particular when this very de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation of a contemporary piece is precisely the act or the added element that bears the significance of the work.

6 See the further explanation by Robert Ginsberg: Aesthetic Qualities in the Experience of Ruins. In: Michael H. Mitias (ed.): Aesthetic Quality and Aesthetic Experience. Amsterdam: Rodopi 1988.

In other words, since architectural works and their remnants are inseparable from their original context, if they are nevertheless moved, this implicitly still present (but physically missing) original context definitely adds further layers to the interpretation of the works. An example of this is the contemporary Finnish artist Anssi Pulkkinen's project *Street View (Reassembled)* from 2016–2017, when a family home from Syria, destroyed during the war, was bought from the original owners and then transported across Europe on a 13-metre long flatbed trailer. The tour stopped in larger cities and the house was exhibited mainly in public spaces, hence not in private galleries or museums, in order to reach as many people as possible, not only those interested in contemporary art.⁷ Here the original context or environment (the historical-political-social-cultural 'background') is also referred to, since the rubble of the family home has brought some of that along. And this reference to its background (our knowledge that it comes from war-torn Syria) plays an essential role in the open-access public display of the debris, since knowing (about) this background contributes to the main intention of the artist: to literally bring the suffering close to that 'involuntary' and random public that had earlier observed the tragic fate of civilians in a war only indirectly, through newspapers or on television or computer screens.⁸

Coming back to the above cases of the transportation of classical antique heritage, unquestionably, these shifted and exhibited remnants of an original ruin can maintain and even demonstrate their archaeological and architecture-historical importance. We can get art historical knowledge through observing them in the museum and naturally also perceive and enjoy many of their aesthetic properties, but nevertheless, our experience of them as a ruin will be completely different. Just think, for example, of how their connection with Nature is cancelled – exactly that Nature which is the main agent of the ruination in the classical cases. Over a long time period, Nature gradually eats up the building, and when one visits a ruin, the struggle of these two elements is still on-going, as has been highlighted by numerous interpreters from Simmel through Macaulay to Ginsberg, to name but a few.⁹ This struggle will no longer be perceivable at all when the ruin is placed in the sterile context of the hosting museum, where it is thus 'musealised', put in a vitrine, and constantly kept in one specific condition through the maintenance, care, and conservation of its state. In this sense it is not a ruin anymore, but an architectural exhibition piece inside a monumental display case (the museum's building).

7 The book accompanying the project offers a profound analysis: Aleksí Malmberg and Annuka Vähäsöyrinki (eds): *Home Re-assembled: On Art, Destruction & Belonging*. Heijningen: Jap Sam Books 2017.

8 See a longer analysis on this work by Anssi Pulkkinen, and on two other art projects where constructions were transported, in my publication: Zoltán Somhegyi: *Moving Architecture: Aesthetics Around the Changing Context and Status of Constructions*. In: *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 63 (2022), p. 84–105.

9 Georg Simmel: *The Ruin* (transl. David Kettler). In: Kurt H. Wolff (ed.): *Georg Simmel 1858–1918: A Collection of Essays with Translations and Bibliography*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1959, pp. 259–266; Rose Macaulay: *Pleasure of Ruins*. New York: Walker Company 1966; Robert Ginsberg: *The Aesthetics of Ruins*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

Such a musealised display of ruins can thus be considered the opposite end on the aforementioned scale of possible afterlives of ruins, compared to their complete destruction by ISIS terrorists. It is the opposite end of the scale not only because it simply maintains and moreover cares for what the extremists want to destroy, but, more precisely, also because it is exactly the temporal perspective, manifested in the aesthetically pleasing ruinous form, that those conserving it are attempting to save. While the terrorists accelerate the ruination at an extreme speed (by ‘completing’ natural dereliction in the few seconds of an explosion) in order to obstruct the classical ruin’s ability to serve as canonical reference and to emanate aesthetic qualities in the future, the museum aims at keeping the architectural and aesthetic condition of a ruin for the future, thus not only slowing down the process of ruination (that would otherwise result in complete disappearance) but even stopping any forms of further decay.

Therefore, let me repeat that this second case is incomparably better than the terrorists’ act, but we shall keep in mind that something – more precisely the organic connection of the ruin to its soil, its organic embeddedness in its genuine location – will nevertheless be harmed when the ruin is brought away, hence the perception and experience of the noble remnants is significantly modified.

After these considerations, and in order to understand what changes take place in the above two opposing cases, let me bring into the discussion a third type of ‘ruins’, through which we can analyse some further aspects.

This third form cannot fully be interpreted as a ruin: it cannot even be placed on the scale representing the forms of ‘afterlives’ of ruins. As a matter of fact, in some aspects it ‘functions’ quite the opposite way, being an artificially born and deceiving set of classical-style ruins: it is the fake ruin. Fake ruins (to use other terms: scam ruins, sham ruins, follies, or artificial ruins) are well-known from the history of art and architecture, with a peak period in the 18th and 19th centuries, where many of them appeared on aristocratic estates and even in public parks. In these works of design, there is an attempt to re-create the aesthetic effects of ruins by superficially imitating the formal signs of classical architectural dereliction. Hence they look like ruins, but unlike classical ones that were slowly deteriorated by natural forces, fake ruins are built, such that even the ‘direction’ of their ‘establishment’ is opposite.

Although their history and also their fate may look different – in fact, in many aspects they *are* different – from the two previously discussed opposing cases of the afterlife of ruins – ruin clearance and ruin musealisation – still, there is one common aspect that links the intentions of the builders and designers of fake ruins to the above two: all three are connected to the awareness, apperception, and acknowledgement of the *power* of ruins. In other words, this power emanating from ruins is a curious common departure point in all the three. We saw in the case of the extremist ruin clearance that the aim was to destroy this power forever, whereas in the case of musealising them the aim is to prolong it for as long as possible. Fake ruins, however, are trying not only to re-create, but even to create from scratch the aesthetic effect of the encounter with ruins, but without the actual decay happening. We can even describe this attempt as a sort of ‘respectful abuse’ of the aesthetic power of decay manifested in classical ruins, and this thrilling decay is then what is superficially imitated in artificial ruins.

Here is where our ‘triangular’ comparison between the three becomes even more fascinating, because now we can see better that fake ruins will thus be a sort of counter-tendency for both of the above two, despite the aforementioned ‘power of ruins’ as a common point in all the three. Let us examine these oppositions.

On a physical level, the terrorists’ ruin clearance attempts to destroy even the ruins that have been left from an original monument, while commissioners of fake ruins aim at establishing a ‘ruin’ even where there has never been any original. Hence, regarding materiality, the first is trying to eliminate the already existing one completely, while the other attempts to create something that has never existed.

On a perhaps more intangible level, and in the other pairing of the fake ruin with the preserved ruin, we can claim that in the musealised ruin-display we only have the mere structure, without being able to perceive and experience it in its original context and thus without the mode of experiencing it *as* a ruin – while fake ruins attempt to create this very experience. Scam ruins thus attempt to offer us the opportunity to perceive a special environment, atmosphere, and ‘ambience’, but what they actually manage to create is only the illusion of the genuine experience. Hence they try to offer the visitor exactly that which is missing from the musealised architectural remnant, but they do this without the actual existence of an original, of which the fake ruin would be a fragment, and thus artificial ruins lack an actual, tangible connection to the distant past.¹⁰

This is what makes this ‘triangle’ interesting, because although the acknowledging of the power of ruins is the same in all the three cases, there are obvious differences in how to ‘handle’ this power, and there are thus opposing aspects between all the three regarding the intentions of cancelling, conserving, creating, and re-creating.

This will bring us closer to an understanding of the real issue at stake with classical ruins. From the above it seems clear that nothing substitutes and nothing can fully substitute for real ruins or for the aesthetic effect of real ruins. Ruins can be threatened by extreme ideologies, biased political agendas, or financial considerations. Sometimes, through utmost care, we can save their physical remnants and thus have some of their aesthetic qualities conserved, and have some references to the mere form or shape of the building from which they originate, but without the non-reconstructible genuine context and surrounding in which that building used to be embedded. In the case of fake ruins, by focusing only on this ‘ambience’ we can try to re-create the intellectual and emotional impact that the encounter with a genuine ruin (in its original location) might generate. However, in ideal cases, the two should be considered equally: we should pay attention to not only the authenticity of the physical remains but also the authenticity of the place in which they were originally embedded, since only the non-substitutable and inimitable combination of these two can provide us with

10 See more on the aesthetic features and fakeness of fake ruins in a recent paper of mine on this subject: Zoltán Somhegyi: From Mistaking Fakeness to Mistake in Fakeness: Artificial Ruins Between Aesthetics and Deception. In: *Studi di estetica* XLIX (2021), 1, pp. 59–74.

the full experience of the aesthetic properties and qualities of the genuine ruins. This may appear to be an overly 'strict' definition and requirement for authenticity in and around ruins, but it can perhaps be used as an ideal (and idealised) departure point, allowing a myriad of varieties and often also inevitable compromises in the actual solutions.

Moreover, these are – or should be – not only aesthetic considerations that can stay on a theoretical level, but should always be taken into account when practical decisions are to be made. Regarding ruins and their management, constant and careful evaluations are needed. These assessments may be directed – with regard to the material itself – to the aforementioned grades of repair, reconstruction, or rebuilding; and all these can have significant consequences on authenticity, material history, aesthetics, national identity politics, etc. Besides these, however, the assessment of a ruin's management – with regard to the environment – should also entail the issue of how to secure and arrange its larger context.

To provide just one example for both of these above aspects: if the ruin is in its original place, and is still subject to Nature's eroding forces, how much of that can be allowed for this intervention to proceed? When is it necessary or inevitable to add, for example, a defensive cover above the remains? Deciding about such a solution requires delicate considerations, because on the one hand a cover or roof may slow down or impede further natural destruction by rain and snow, while on the other hand it obviously appears as a newly added element that interferes with viewing the remnant – actually, it is a typical example of how various values may become contradictory, as was highlighted by Alois Riegl already over a century ago.¹¹

Partly connected to this is the other aspect in the management of a ruin: the maintenance of its authentic environment and the authenticity of that environment. Remaining again with the classical examples, if a Mediterranean ruin, deriving from antiquity, stays in its original, actual location, surrounded by the typical vegetation, and – just to increase the magnificence of its fascinating effect – without many modern elements in sight, then it can be very powerful. However, just imagine the same ruin if it is in the middle of a busy modern town, with high-rise buildings constructed around it, where the dominant visual element around the ruin is the concrete. This can become crucial also, because, with regard to the context, the visible signs of Nature encroaching and even eating up or overgrowing the construction is an important contribution to the aesthetic effect of ruins. This aspect is something that impresses not only the larger public, but even the first discoverers or re-discoverers and explorers of ruined architecture, as for example Vittoria Calvani informs us regarding the fascination of the 19th-century explorer Henri Mouhot and his description of Angkor Wat.¹²

11 Alois Riegl: *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin*. In: *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1982), pp. 21–51. Originally published in German: *Der moderne Denkmalkultus: Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung*. Wien, Leipzig: Braumüller 1903.

12 Vittoria Calvani: *Lost Cities*. Geneva: Minerva 1976, p. 133.

But then again, just as we did above, here we should ask what and how much of it can be allowed? If vegetation is completely taken from the ruin's body and from its immediate surrounding, then the risk is that it again sterilises the appearance of the former construction, resulting in the ruin losing its 'romantic' appearance and its aesthetic appeal. At the same time, if vegetation is not cropped at all, it overgrows the ruin so much that after a while the man-made parts are practically invisible, and with such change in the proportion one cannot perceive the aesthetic appeal in following the struggle of the human construction and the natural forces, picturesquely manifested in classical ruins. This dilemma arises anywhere there are ruins that need to be taken care of, for example in the ancient Maya city of Palenque in Mexico, where a large part of the city's ruins is still in the forest.¹³ In such a case, the thickly grown vegetation can document how it looked for centuries and in the time of its discovery, but if it is not cleared at all, it may impede the site's full aesthetic effect on its visitors.

As we have seen in the beginning, there can be a myriad of things considered to be ruins in everyday discourse, and from these I have shown what we can consider to be authentic ones. In the same way, there can be many possible forms of afterlife for classical ruins, and in one aspect or the other they all have their own challenges. Fanatical clearance, dereliction by simple neglect, historically biased reconstruction, technically erroneous restoration, or overt musealisation resulting in sterile displays are just a few of the challenges to avoid. In different ways they are all connected to the management of the power that classical ruins emanate and that should be channelled somehow, somewhere. The allure of this emanated power is so strong that it can even inspire attempts to re-create it through fake ruins – which, by the way, sooner or later require just the same maintenance as genuine ruins, since very often they are, nowadays, just as interesting from a cultural historical point of view as from the efficiency of their original ability to re-create emotions that normally only the genuine ones can.

Nevertheless, even this aesthetic falsification, the typical motivation behind the construction of scam ruins, underpins the features and significance of the genuine ruins and of their authenticity, including the originality of the context and surroundings in which they are embedded. Ruins' possible afterlives can be very challenging, especially if we want to avoid having them become ruins of ruins.

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13 I am grateful to Jessica Stephanie Sete for drawing my attention regarding this feature in the site of Palenque.

Abstract

Von der Ruine zu den Ruinen der Ruine

Das problematische Nachleben architektonischen Verfalls

Das Kapitel beginnt mit einer Definition klassischer Ruinen. Diese dient als Ausgangspunkt für die Darstellung einiger Formen des Nachlebens von Ruinen, ihrer heutigen Relevanz und der Herausforderungen ihres Erhalts. Im Vergleich zum ›natürlichen‹ Nachleben – dem allmählichen, durch Erosion und Bewuchs bedingten Vergehen – ergibt sich eine Skala mit zwei Enden: auf der einen Seite der komplette Abriss als Ergebnis aktiver, teilweise extremistisch motivierter Zerstörungen, auf der anderen Seite die sorgfältige Abtragung, Überführung und Ausstellung architektonischer Fragmente. Die Analyse dieser Fälle wird dann erweitert durch das Heranziehen eines speziellen Falls: künstliche Ruinen. Dies erlaubt eine abschließende Betrachtung einiger wichtiger Aspekte des Umgangs mit Ruinen und ihrer Verortung.

