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Rediscovering architecture : Paestum in eighteenth-century architectural experience and theory

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Propositions / Stellingen

1. The rediscovery of Paestum was a rediscovery of architecture.
2. Paestum had a key role in eighteenth-century architectural, aesthetic and artistic debates; the concepts that were at the centre of eighteenth-century discourse came together and were stimulated through architectural experience, at Paestum in particular.
3. Opposite the poverty of a so-called Paestum order stands the richness of the experience *in situ*.
4. In eighteenth-century architectural thought experience was the key to analyse buildings and offer design tools. With the emerging importance of architectural experience architects broke with the traditional Vitruvian analysis of architecture and way of thinking about buildings.
5. In discussing eighteenth-century architecture and the sublime one should not focus on the designs on paper by Boullée, but on the contradictory spatial experiences described in eighteenth-century writings. The concept of the sublime in architecture speaks not only about vastness in buildings but gives words to all paradoxical experiences that can occur at a complex site as Paestum.
6. In thinking about ruins and decay authors like Diderot and Soane show an awareness of their own being through ruins. In Paestum it is inversed: there is an awareness of the architecture through the spectator's own being.
7. Piranesi's Paestum publication should neither be seen in the light of the Graeco-Roman debate nor as his late diversion to the Greek camp, but as a plea for the architect as artist and inventor.
8. In primitivism it is difficult to reconcile the urge for invention with the urge to a return to the origins of architecture.
9. To be of value for the application in eighteenth-century architecture Paestum had to be put into a historical series of Greek classical architecture and stripped of its site, situation and specificities.
10. In architectural history there should also be a place for projects and ideas that are unfinished, utopian or debatable, with a paradoxical or 'negative' outcome, or deviating from the straight road of success stories.
11. The contemporary relevance should not be an aim of architectural history, but the consciousness of the 'longue durée' of design questions, ideas about the (cultural) significance of architecture and its place in society offers the necessary context and depth to understand contemporary architecture.

12. The spatial experience should have a significant role in the study of architecture and of the history of architecture.

13. When writing a thesis on eighteenth-century architectural theory in one of the centres of the eighteenth-century architectural debate historical sensations are never far away.

14. Dance and architecture go wonderfully together. The interactions between the space and the movement of dancers, give both another dimension. Space is probed and defined by the movements of the dance, while dance gets its articulation through space.