Chapter 1

Architecture's Two Bodies

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in collaboration[1] with *Claudio Sgarbi*

Marco Frascari and I "grew up" academically in the 1980s, when semiotics was the rage. Roman Jakobson famously had converted neurological research on World War I aphasia victims into a binary signifier that dominated architecture theory for the remainder of the century.[2] "Metaphor," aligned with the brain's ability to recognize similarity, became the basis of humanistic *poiesis*. "Metonymy" took on functions opposite this poetic: logic, instrumentality. Metaphor's semblance-function connected to the ethnography of sympathetic magic; in contagious magic, metonymic contiguity revealed anticipations of rational causation.

While the binary metaphor-metonymy grounded humanistic theory in architecture, it forced a misreading of one of its most respected sources, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In his unfinished final work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, the French phenomenologist had written:

> [That the realization that the world is not an object] does not mean that there was a fusion or coinciding of me with it: on the contrary, this occurs because a sort of dehiscence *opens my body in two*, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is *overlapping* or *encroachment*, so that we may say that the things pass into us, as well as we into the things.[3] [emphasis mine]

Functions clearly differentiated in the cases of aphasia victims' loss of *either* semblance *or* contiguity functions, seem, in individual non-aphasiac subjects, to *combine* in an uncanny subject/object cross-inscription that is like having, paradoxically, *two bodies* separated by a paradoxical void (dehiscence). These two bodies within the subject, *made invisible* by cross-inscription, would not be distinguished without seeing them separated, in the aphasias of brain-damaged victims, into two separate pathological states.

While the binary of metaphor/metonymy was employed to commend ideological victories of poetic mentality over instrumentality, binary logic would fail theoretically and ethnographically to account for the gap intrinsic to the "flesh of the world." Worse, binary logic would misrepresent the of the gap's resistance to domestication, related to what Ernst Jentsch had described as the "primary cross-inscription of the uncanny"—life and death "passing into each other."[4]

Frascari's legacy began with an architectural version of the metaphor/metonymy binary—the *technē* of *logos* and the *logos* of *technē*. In his first famous published essay Frascari used chiasmus to

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[1] Thanks to Claudio Sgarbi for developing the idea of catalepsis in conversations during Spring 2014.

[2] Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances in Fundamentals of Language" (1956), http://theory.theasintheas.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/jakobson_Aphasia.pdf, accessed April 2015.

[3] Bernard Flynn, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/merleau-ponty/>, accessed April 2015.

[4] Ernst Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen," *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8, 22 (August 26, 1906): 195–98 and 8, 23 (September 1, 1906): 203–05. Jentsch's two "atoms" of the uncanny were (1) the presence of death-in-life, as fate or fear of death; and (2) the continuation of life past the point of literal death.

allow the two terms to "haunt" each other. *Logos*, not "logic," was an account, a *story*, often a strange one. His *technē* came from Giambattista Vico's *factum*, which the 18c. philosopher had himself cross-inscribed with the True (*verum*), hidden within making.[6] Vico's uncanny epithet *verum ipsum factum* ("we may know that which we have made") reprised Heraclitus's *palintonos harmoniē* (etymologically the architectural joint between disparate parts) to produce Frascari's clairvoyant idea that the detail generated not just architecture but also a way of knowing.[7] *Technē* and *logos* were like Castor and Pollux: mortal/divine twins circling around life and death like a sun and moon around a common central earth—aligned by a single diameter line that could, at certain times, be the liminal passageway for staging a forbidden reunion. This chiastic image allowed Frascari to invent his own versions of *palintonos harmoniē*, drawn from stories and other constructs using the same pattern.

How did Frascari discover this method? I suggest that he *retroactively* realized what he had written in 1984, as if the words had come to him first, the full meanings later. At a Semiotic Society of America meeting in 1985, Frascari and I were fascinated by an analysis of the 1945 British film, *Dead of Night*.[8] This anthology film about an architect caught in a circular dream involved all four "detached virtualities" that Jorge Luis Borges had identified with the fantastic: doubles, circular time travel, contamination of reality by the dream or fiction (e.g. theory by fabulation), and the story-in-the-story (literally *con*-fabulation).[9] It is no coincidence that all four themes involve the Jentschian uncanny: *reversed predications*, a *gap*, then *cross-inscriptions of space and time.* But, even better, all four materialize the "dialectic of the two bodies" as twins rotating about a common center, held apart by a diameter they will traverse to make uncanny exceptions. The film, we realized, had spookily anticipated the theme of our own session, "monsters of architecture." It seemed to have already answered the questions we had not yet asked!

After this demonstration of architecture's involvement with the uncanny, I became fascinated by film's ability to demonstrate temporality in architecture, and developed a "visual calculus" to describe it. Frascari's trajectory went from monsters to cuisine and neuroscience. But, both of us continued to draw on this "primordial experience" of confabulation, particularly in the way that one story becomes an "every story," and particularly when two bodies forbidden to meet are allowed a brief exception, a palintonic, tell-tale detail.

Frascari sped past the ideology of instrumentality/*poiesis*. Confabulation requires experiment. It is not satisfied with an alibi of *coincidentia oppositorum* ("coincidence of opposites"). More interesting and ethnographically substantive products of binary signification derive from the "occultation" of one term of the binary in relation to the dominant term. Slavoj Žižek describes occultation as "absolute recoil" (*zugrunde gehen*): meaning "resonates from a distance," creating, in the original term, the phenomenon of essence.[10] Occultation and resonance are not abstractions. Although binaries vary widely—they ground the "contingencies" of cultures, ideologies, and Zeitgeists—occultation's

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[6] Giambattista Vico and L. M. Palmer, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians …* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1988).

[7] Edward Hussey. *The Presocratics* (New York: Scribner, 1973). *Palintonos harmoniē* is in no way a merger but a constructed, temporalized, and dynamic tension.

[8] *Dead of Night* (film), Arturo Cavalcanti *et alia* directors, Ealing Studios, 1945.

[9] James E. Irby, "Introduction," in Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings*, trans. André Maurois and Donald A. Yates (New York: New Directions, 1964).

[10] Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Verso, 2014).

materiality creates a Rosetta Stone allowing comparisons across distant time periods and contrasting cultures. James Frazer, Jane Harrison, and other turn-of-the-century mythographers unknowingly corroborated Vico's idea of a cultural "imaginative universal" with massive ethnographical evidence of common practices—all of which involved occultation and resonance.

Humans invest the world with subjectivity by selectively negating/sublating its objectivity. This "metonymical rule" might be stated: "what privation removes *as object* (limitation or intentional numbing of the senses—*catalepsis*) is returned—*as subject-in –disguise*, suddenly appearing from out of a hiding-place (metalepsis).[11] The chief celebrity of this subjective return is the *djinn* or *dæmon*, the model for Eros who, Hesiod warns, is a "loosener of limbs, who subdues the mind and prudent counsel in the chests of all gods and of all men."[12] The *djinn* is distinct from the "genius" of the individual Psyche, the basis of *ingenium* ("ingenuity") and the Stoic *animus ("penetrating spark")*, which, as *cælum* ("heaven"/"wedge"), is manifested by *agutezza* ("wit"), communicating the *gens* of the collective *manes*, ancestral family spirits tended by Hestia at the household hearth.[13]

Metonymical occultation and resonance repairs damage done by Jakobson's binary of semblance/metaphor and contiguity/metonymy by showing how metonymy uses negation and absence in material cultural practices.[14] This has eluded many humanists-phenomenologists who would seem most to benefit, who have misread metonymy as *against* metaphor. This is flesh-of-the-world as both intertwining and cross-inscription, a gap *coincident* with an overlap. To restore the place of the subject—and subjectivity—in recognizing architecture's two bodies requires metonymy. And, understanding metonymy, in my view, requires a combined reading of Jacques Lacan and Vico.[15]

Experiment in Occultation

The gap *and* uncanny overlap of Merleau-Ponty's "flesh of the world," are embedded in religion, folk-lore, the obsessions of popular culture, and the magic materiality of everyday space-time. This is the flesh that re-clothes bones on Judgment Day. It does not transform objects directly; rather it alters the space-time horizons so that objects become Real in subjective-receptive acts: surprise, discovery, annunciation, apocalypse.

Consider the examples of the close-up magician and the pickpocket. Neither uses props. Both "numb" perceptual space so that whatever travels through it seems to appear/disappear "as if by magic."

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[11] Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* … (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1951), 95, 111; also Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956).

[12] This critical component of Eros is missing in Alberto Pérez-Gómez's citation of Hesiod's *Theogony*, 116–20. *Built Upon Love, Architectural Longing After Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), 12. Pérez-Gómez steers away from catalepsis with his own added (non-Hesiodic, metaphoric) attribute, "the love that softens hearts." Socrates continues the catalepsy theme in his account of Diotima's instructions on the nature of love, related to the Socrated *dæmon*, Eros, a paralyzing "sting-ray."

[13] For a disentanglement of *djinn* and *gen* and differentiation of Eros and Psyche, see H. C. E. Zacharias's review of Onians, *Origins*, in *Anthropos* 48, 1/2 (1953): 309–11; URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40451207>, accessed April 2015.

[14] I have made a detailed case for the role of metonymy in the occultation process. See Donald Kunze, "The Unsung Role of Metonymy in Constructing Sites of Exception: Ekphrasis, Divination, Epiphany," in Gevork Hartoonian, ed., *Global Perspectives on Critical Architecture* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), *in press*.

[15] See Donald Kunze, "Vichianism after Vico," *The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (London: Elsevier, 2009).

Deadening space-time constitutes an act of "catalepsis"—death-within-life/life-within-death. The presence of a numbed cataleptic space inside spatial experience constitutes "super-symmetry," a sustained balance maintained by fractal-like recursion, a coincidence of something with itself—a "more than everything" and "less than nothing." Super-symmetry is experienced as "epiphany." "Numbing" (variants: paralysis, inattention, freezing, immobility, simulated death) can be theorized through the rhetorical ideas of catalepsis and its complement, "metalepsis," the form of metonymy that regulates frames. "Confabulation" experiments with catalepsis/metalepsis directly, using the themes of the story-in-the-story, travel through time, the double, or contamination of reality by dreams or fictions.

Confabulation is not just a matter of providing *logoi*, "accounts." Following Frascari, we align the *technē* of *logos* with Heraklitus's *palintonos harmoniē*—etymologically derived from the architectural joining of two *disparate* materials, combining one part with that *which is not a part*. *Con*-fabulation combines this alien non-part with super-symmetry, as epiphany-through-catalepsis. *Con*-fabulation challenges us to join *unrelated* stories, not to compare/contrast, or to defer to historical contexts. Only by suspending these issues do new possibilities emerge.

Magic is about *effects*, not supernatural agencies. Magic sets up the site of art inside the bodies/minds of the audience. The body of the audience, the ultimate site of exception, is where art and architecture "happen." Without experimental combination of *unrelated* stories, confabulation terminates prematurely as an interpretive exercise; with it, confabulation reveals the conjoined relations of surprise, revelation, epiphany.

Close-up magic, picking pockets

Confabulation's movement from the improbable to epiphany involves an imaginary thin perceptual screen set up between the objective world and the subject's space, the point of view. The close-up magician must "numb" the space on the object-side of this screen by performing a jumble of seemingly useless, mistaken, or unnecessary motions. Hiddenness is, thus, in the brain of the viewer. Once the audience has ceased to pay attention to these "accidents," the space they occupied becomes available for "exaptation," a storage-container for occulting objects and motions technically in plain view. Exaptation is an at-first "useless" consequence of some other functioning trait, like the architectural spandrel in relation to an arch; but, when there is a new environmental-contextual demand, the exapted trait quickly comes forward, "always-already" present, ready to perform correctly and surprisingly.[17] Occultation is the means and necessary preface; exaptation produces the required surprise ending.

Because the pickpocket must work directly with the subject's body, s/he builds up occulted space on the alternative "subject side" of the perceptual screen, invading personal space that is usually protected. Numbing the "mark" until s/he ceases to take notice, the pickpocket can then perform the well-practiced motions. Both the close-up magician and the pickpocket require: (1) catalepsis, followed by metalepsis—use of the space between the original culturally-prescribed frame and a second extemporaneously constructed frame, where (2) occultation stores actions/objects (exaptation), resulting in a seemingly magical epiphany. Catalepsis thus relates directly to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's flesh of the world, as well as to Jacques Lacan's definition of the phallic signifier, Φ, not solely in relation to sex functions but as the more general function of appearing and disappearing. We can unify our notation of

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[17] Slavoj Žižek links exaptation to the architectural spandrel in "Architectural Parallax, Spandrels, and Other Phenomena of Class Struggle," Tilton Gallery, New York, April 23, 2009; reprinted in *lacanian ink*, URL: <http://www.lacan.com/essays/?page_id=218>, accessed April 2015.

confusion-occultation-exaptation-epiphany to a single term, the phallic Φ. We gain the function of visibility/invisibility, without losing the sex.[18]

"Simactæonides"

The two "phallic" stories I experimentally confabulate combine (1) the project of artificial memory and (2) the super-symmetry of space-time through detached virtuality, with particular emphasis on "space-within-space." The first story is the invention of artificial memory by Simonides of Ceos, directly related to Camillo's and Llull's famous memory projects. Coincidentally, this is a story about architectural collapse and the (magical) exaptation of occulted details, through palintonic *harmoniē*, materialized as "acousmatics" (whisper, song) or "stochastic resonance" (symmetry through and within accident). It leads us to conclude, with Piranesi, that (architectural) Ruin is the ground of the True, revealing the role of Platonic *anamnesis*, knowledge in the form of memory.[19] This Ruin literalizes "going to one's ground" (Hegel's "absolute recoil")—subjectivity's unique place of exaptation (occulted circumstances).

Scopus, a well-known politician, hires Simonides to sing his praises at a banquet celebrating his victory in a wrestling contest. To avoid bringing bad luck on his boastful employer, Simonides inserts a hymn to the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, but Scopas is annoyed by this addition and refuses Simonides half the agreed-on fee. Shortly later, Simonides gets word that two strangers wait outside, wanting to speak with him; but when he goes outside the street is empty. As he turns to go back to the banquet, the hall collapses. Victims are crushed beyond recognition, and relatives who arrive at the scene to claim their dead are horrified to find they cannot identify the bodies for proper burial. Simonides, however, had remembered the name of each guest by associating it with his place at the banquet table. He is now to name each corpse according to the spot it had fallen. Grateful relatives reward Simonides handsomely; the "technique of memory places" is invented; the identities of the "two men" who, in calling Simonides outside, saved his life, are easily guessed.

My second story combines spatial monstrosity—one space enclosing another—with bodily monstrosity—one body enclosing another. The hunter Actæon stumbles across the sacred grove where Diana is bathing with her attendants. Enraged, the goddess of the hunt splashes water onto Actæon, transforming into a stag, the most timid of the forest beasts. His dogs sense the transformation and, failing to recognize their master now covered with hide and horns, chase and kill him. Luigi Vanvitelli, architect of Caserta and fan of Vico's *New Science*, tells the story in stone and water at the head of a cascade representing the birth of the universe.

Actæon is a member of Ovid's Theban "panel"—Cadmus, Tiresius, Narcissus—all famous for the uncanny theme of "seeing what they should not have seen."[21] This Φ of sudden appearance, of what should have remained occulted, involves the metonymic logic of concealing-revealing "divine contents." (Simonides also belongs to this tradition because he *had not intended* to aid undertakers at a gruesome

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[18] The Φ is phallus not penis, as some have confused in relation to the ancient boundary-marker, the herm. The herm's *phallus* and head reveal the relationship of *gens* (sexuated being, *psyche*) to the *wealth of Hades* brought forth at the beginning of the (Olympian) year by Hestia and distributed by Hermes—gods who appear side by side rarely, but always in sculptures *representing the calendar*. Onians (*Origins*, 122). Herms thus function as apotropes, points of trade, boundary markers, and family signs. See Norman O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: The Evolution of a Myth* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1947).

[19] Žižek's "absolute recoil" is Hegel's *zugrunde gehen*—to go to one's ground. I read this as "ruin" as well as (Hegel's) Golgotha.

[21] Leonard Barkan, "Diana and Actaeon, the Myth as Synthesis," *English Literary Renaissance* 10, 3 (September 1980): 317–59.

disaster scene. He had "occulted" this knowledge unintentionally, casually, and only later found it to be critical, as a metonymy of exaptation.)

Detached virtuality, left-over spaces

Both stories reveal something about architecture's debt to occultation. The first is about built objects and living-then-dead subjects within a paradoxical space of catalepsis (known through memory), the second about the structure of catalepsis in the formation of super-symmetry (known through realizing the detached virtuality of "the two bodies"). Actæon, walks through a domesticated forest, where game is there to be hunted. He stumbles across a different *kind* of space, an uncanny space that is detached but still within the forest—a space requiring a turn, a hinge (hence, Diana's identity as Djana, or 'Jana, consort of 'Janus/Dianus). Its location is problematic. It is within the forest and outside it at the same time, the super-symmetry of the "part that is not a part."[23]
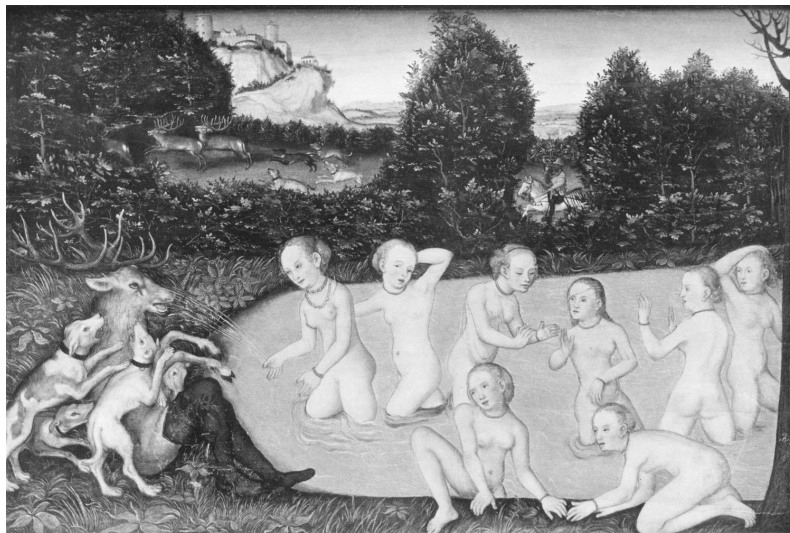

Figure 1.1. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Diana and Actæon*, 50 x 73 cm, oil on wood, c. 1518, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. *Source:* WikiArt.org.

Actæon "finds what he should not have found," converting the privation of Diana's grove into a prohibition that, when violated, must be punished. Vico explains that the sacred springs used to sanctify the first marriages required ritualized entry (*New Science*, §528). The springs came from an invisible source (privation) and, as sacred, were protected by religion (prohibition). What is privated objectively is replaced subjectively, as prohibition, in Actæon's case the matter of his unintended violation.[24]

The super-symmetry of Diana's grove corresponds to Actæon's two bodies, hunter and hunted, in Ovid's detailed, otherwise inexplicable account of each of the thirty-six (33+3) hunting dogs who pursue and devour their master. Three bitches, Melanchoetes, Theridamas, and Oresitrophos, are the *last* to join the chase, but thanks to a shortcut through the mountains, they arrive *first* on the scene. Like close-up magicians, pickpockets, and the wolf of Little Red Riding Hood, they use the "space of catalepsis" to

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[23] Lacan's word for this phenomenon, *extimité*, was coined in Seminar XVI, "From One Other to the Other" (1969). See Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimity," in Mark Bracher, *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society* (New York: New York University, 1994), 74–87.

[24] The matter of intentionality troubled all commentators of the Diana–Actæon story (Barkan, "Diana and Actaeon," 324).

slow down reality in order to speed up their travel. These triplets play the role of Cerberus, the three-headed dog who protects Hades, another super-symmetrical "invisibility" inside/outside the living world.

Revenge

Just as Actæon may not have been completely innocent when he stumbled across Diana's grove, the collapse of the banquet hall in the Simonides tale may not have been an accident. Nicole Loraux reminds us that the Prytaneion became a civic center as a part of a conscious plan to supplant the clan-based "hearth religions" of individual households. In the Athenian Prytaneion, an all-male fraternity maintained a collectivized civic flame; the new political order used homosexual love to end the strife among households, whose cyclopean independence had been maintained by individual families' hearths and *manes*.[25]

Simonides possibly had recognized the religious peril of such a transfer of power and, as a precaution, inserted a poem of praise of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, into his *encomium* for Scopus. The story from this point curiously resonates with a thematic use of the number two.[27] Scopus renders only a half-fee, refusing to pay for the reference to religion. Simonides is called outside by "two strangers" who want to speak to him. Before he can return, the hall collapses, crushing all inside. Their corpses are unrecognizable; their *bios* is reduced to *zoē*, pure animal life; they are, as unnamed, carrion.

The name in relation to the family hearth is the key to the Simonides story. Called to the wreckage scene by families desperate to identify the remains of their fathers and avoid their ancestors' permanent curse, he remembers his method of *exaptation*—the technique of remembering names by organizing their "accidental" locations within a system of precise placement. Now with only the evidence of this placement, he is able restore the *bios*-identity, tied to the family hearth and worship of the *manes*. The Simonides story is a radical critique of the Prytaneion, just as Euripides' farce, *Alcestis*, hammered home the contradictory demands made on the wives and daughters who had attended the hearth-flame. Simonides provides a cure with its chiastic formula for artificial memory.

The truth of confabulation is itself devoid of content. Rather, its site of exception is a super-symmetry through which all who pass are purified—a Purgatory allowing the second Symbolic death, which could be read as "death *of* as well as *in* the Symbolic." Thanks to the exaptation of key details—overlooked, even, by generations of tellers and scholars—we uncover a history corroborated by the careful scholarship of Nicole Loraux, a history that is true however not just because it happened but because of the *nature of subjectivity* and the subject's relation to the "flesh of the world." Confabulation's relation to this true is not accidental. Juxtaposition forces the *palintonos harmoniē* of "stochastic resonance" that is the acousmatic medium of philosophic/psychoanalytic as well as ethnographical (lived) truth. Then and only then do we discover the epiphany of exception.

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[25] Nicole Loraux, *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens* (New York: Zone Books, 2002). Loraux's view contrasts with Pérez-Gómez's unqualified praise for the Prytaneion as a civic center for "all citizens." *Built Upon Love*, 130.

[27] Donald Kunze, "Skiagraphy and the *Ipsum* of Architecture," *Architecture and Shadow*, *VIA* 11 (1990): 62–75. My contention that the Simonides story is structured by chiasmus affords the realization of an anomaly: the twin gods appear *together*, and their overlap constitutes super-symmetry.