La sincretica topografia di Tallum: verso la morte – verso la vita

Tallum's Syncretic Topography: To Death – To Life

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Questo documento si concentra sulla topografia di Skogskyrkogården (The Woodland Cemetery), progettata da Sigurd Lewerentz e Erik Gunnar Asplund, a partire dal 1914. Invece di determinare le affinità formali o stilistiche, questa ricerca esplora la comprensione primaria del territorio per lo schema stesso, entro il più ampio contesto socio-culturale del tempo. Esaminando la profonda pre-occupazione degli architetti per il livello effettivo del terreno del sito, si rivelano alcuni dei principali modi in cui il sito è stato (ri)articolato come una topografia sincretica che ha cercato di attivare rinnovati legami tra i vivi e i morti. Esplorando questa ragione tensionale ci viene offerta inoltre l'opportunità di comprendere meglio come questa pre-occupazione sia stata allineata al moderno tentativo di ristabilire una vita più significativa tramite una realtà più terrena e autentica.

This paper focuses on the topography of Skogskyrkogården (The Woodland Cemetery), designed by Sigurd Lewerentz and Erik Gunnar Asplund, beginning in 1914. Rather than determining formal or stylistic affinities, this research explores the primary understanding of the ground for the scheme itself, within the wider socio-cultural context of the time. Examining the architects' profound pre-occupation with the site's actual ground reveals some of the key ways the site was (re)articulated as a syncretic topography that endeavoured to enable renewed linkages between the living and the dead. Probing this tensional ground moreover affords us opportunities to better understand how this pre-occupation was aligned with the modern attempt to re-establish a more meaningful existence via a more grounded and authentic reality.

Introduction

Across numerous ages and cultures, the design of sacred landscapes and monuments specifically designed and consecrated for burial exist as some of the most telling, concretised forms of a society's attitudes, philosophies and rituals of death. The topographies of cemeteries in particular can be seen to explicitly embody the predominate 'face(s) of death' within wider culture — both symbolically and literally. Cemeteries are not merely mediating thresholds between *extra moenia* and *intra moenia*. For many, cemeteries also exist to mediate thresholds between worlds.

In 1914-15, Swedish architects Sigurd Lewerentz and Erik Gunnar Asplund won the Stockholm South Cemetery Competition (more commonly known today as *Skogskyrkogården*, 'The Woodland Cemetery'). Their winning cemetery design, entitled *Tallum*, was amongst the forerunners in a series of twentieth century municipal cemeteries to be built outside Stockholm proper. The cemetery's pre-determined extra moenia location did not however deter the architects' from endeavouring to create a design that would counterpoise modernity's prevailing tendencies to banish death (and the dead) from daily life. In this paper we shall consider how, through the design of *Tallum*, the architects strove to create a cemetery as

a syncretic typography, which could enable renewed relations between the realms of the living and the dead — and ultimately between conceptions of life, death and renewed life. During recent decades, considerable research has been published on *Skogskyrkogården*.[1] However, most of this has focused on determining formal or stylistic affinities and it's artistic value as a masterpiece,[2] rather than on examining the primary understanding of the ground for the scheme itself as situated within the period's socio-cultural, socio-religious, and socio-political contexts. This paper will examine the architects' profound pre-occupation with the site's actual ground, exploring some of the ways that *ground* has been (re)articulated in order to more meaningfully mediate relationships between the living and the deceased. Through an investigation of *Tallum*'s tensional and syncretic topography, this paper will argue that the architects' fixation on the site's actual ground was aligned with the modern attempt to re-establish a more meaningful existence via a more authentic and rigorous attachment to the ground itself. In short, we speak of the need for a more grounded and authentic reality (mode of being). Thus *ground* in the context of this paper must be understood foremost in the ontological sense; as the Heideggerian notion of ground, as the embodied side of the lived-world and

as the setting and support for articulation.[3] The primary vehicle for situating *Tallum* will be through a discussion considering: nineteenth and twentieth century burial reforms in Sweden; the modern condition of groundless-ness; and the *Tallum* cemetery as 'socio-political ground', 'primordial ground', and 'Christian ground'.

I. Reassessing 'Ground' in Socio-Political Reform

I.A. Nineteenth Century Burial Reform: Hygiene, Aesthetics and Denial of Death

Socio-political reforms and burial reforms are historically and indivisibly entangled in In the Church-State nation of Sweden. From the time of the Middle Ages, three major burial reforms have occurred in Sweden: the banning ad *sanctos* burial (1783); the modification of the Lutheran doctrine to allow cremation (1882); the planning of the first suburban municipal cemetery (Stockholm North Cemetery, 1827). Each of these was chiefly determined by Post-Enlightenment concerns of efficiency, hygiene, aesthetics, and economy. The underlying aim was to banish the face of death from any — all — aspects of everyday life.

With its *extra moenia* siting, Paris' Père Lachaise Cemetery (1804) was Stockholm North Cemetery's main design precedent: a park-like landscape mimicking a secularised

world of leisure, where all thoughts of urbanity's chaos were to be forgotten amidst the sanctity of nature, and where death itself was to be hidden beneath a rationalised, hygienicised, and sublime aesthetic. This reflected and concretised society's prevailing anxiety and denial of death, and desires to suppress the very fact of human finitude. These works and this period can be seen to not only have amplified the physical gap(s) between the realms of the living and the dead, but more critically this period underwent a further widening of the gap in the ontological continuum. Nevertheless, all this is not to say that there was not a high concern for death in this period. On the contrary, society was seemingly obsessed with death – with keeping it sanitised and out of sight as much as possible. Death, or rather a *being-toward-death*, had been rejected by life, and with this a sense of wholeness was lost.[4]

I.B. Twentieth Century Burial Reform: Regeneration and the Search for Authenticity
In Sweden during the early twentieth century, and across the Western world in general at this time, the social climate was characterised by a general feeling of World dissolution, or groundless-ness.[5] War, industrialisation, and the disappearance of any secure canon(s) contributed to a breakdown in the ontological continuum, including a general awareness of the

irreplaceability of the actual ground of the earth. This crisis of the Western psyche in general in this period was also made most explicit in the period's writings, seen for example in works spanning from Nietzsche's "crisis of the spirit"[6] to Rilke's *Worpswede*.
By 1914, when Lewerentz and Asplund were working on their competition proposal for the Stockholm South Cemetery Competition, society's previous sentiments of self-doubt had begun to undergo a transformation, and much of this was tied to a revival of historical roots by State and Church. At this time, Swedish society was experiencing a renewal of self-consciousness, and collective-awareness of the need for increased socio-political and spiritual reformations. State and Church strengthened their union with the aim of establishing a ground for the betterment of culture; which came to be characterised by flexible, anti-hierarchical social structures and an overall more informal lifestyle. It is important to note that burial reform was one of the major issues collaborated upon: the planning of new cemeteries, coupled with a reanimation of the practise of cremation. It was hoped that all this would bring forth an overall change in society's attitude(s) toward death. The motto of this campaign by the unified Church-State was *jämlikhet,* meaning 'equality' and 'sameness'. And as a part of this motto and its polices, all citizens were guaranteed a Lutheran burial

by cremation. With this, death and the dead – once cast out of everyday life – were again included as apart of society's search for a more meaningful and authentic existence.[8]
Up until the Helsingborg Crematorium Competition (1914), this new recognition of death in Swedish society had occurred chiefly through the auspices of social reforms, and the cemetery as an institution was still rationalised; death and its need for inclusion were still pursued chiefly as socio-political constructs. The Helsingborg Competition is extremely significant for many reasons; not in the least because it provided the first architectonic response to Sweden's modern socio-political desires of establishing an equalising, authentic ground that would simultaneously embrace life and death. As a part of this, architecture and landscape were embraced as the primary vehicles with which to realise the desired socio-cultural-spiritual evolutions. The belief was that to elevate the culture and to uplift life, the approach to architecture and landscape had to be transformed, and if this were done, it could provide a rejuvenation – even a salvation – of culture.[9]
The winning design of the Helsingborg Crematorium Competition significantly shaped the brief for the Stockholm South Cemetery that, amongst other things, called for an end to purely romanticised articulations of cemeteries. The new

cemetery typology was to embody optimism and regeneration; expressing renewal individually and collectively — and in death and in life. The hygiene obsessions and rationalisation of the previous period were now to be transformed towards *jämlikhet*. More significantly, the Stockholm South Cemetery brief prescribed a psychological-spatio-temporal sequencing of spaces in which mourners would be encouraged to confront and accept death.[10] They would do this by being engaged in ritualised psycho-spatio-temporal movements progressing from darkness to light, from low to high, from built to natural, and from life to death... to new life.[11] This emotive cycle of mourning was introduced as the necessary reciprocal to function(alism). Thus the living, as well as the dead, were seen as the points of departure in this new approach to cemeterial design.

Sigurd Lewerentz's scheme[12] was amidst the winning entries in the Helsingborg Crematorium Competition that were displayed in the 1914 Baltic Exhibition in Malmö, and it was here, standing before his model with the very telling entitling of '*To death — to life*', that Asplund and Lewerentz would meet and agree to collaborate on the Stockholm South Cemetery Competition.[13]

II. Seeking Authenticity in Tallum's Primordial Ground

The given site for Stockholm South Cemetery was formerly a sand and gravel pit, comprised of a prominent bedrock hill and a vast pine forest. In their *Tallum* proposal,[14] Lewerentz and Asplund strove to not only further the programmatic ideals of the Helsingborg Competition, they also strove to maintain and enhance as many of the site's inherent qualities as possible. They would use the granite ridge and forest as the constant points of reaffirmation and return for their design. For the architects, this was to preserve, improve, and re-discover the (archê)typical, primordial Swedish landscape.[15] Nature, as primordial ground (forest and mound), was understood as authentic because it was perceived as being prior to the present culture — or any other culture. It was seen as the means for recovering the depths of (Swedish) tradition, and thereby a more grounded existence. In short, the site's existing ground, as primordial ground, was perceived as the more grounded representation of the ontological continuum; as the means and receptacle for recovering an ontological understanding of World.

In their winning proposal, all things human-made have been subordinated to the presence of the 'primeval' forest and mound. The pines have been selectively and minimally thinned into smaller burial glades, and all the individual graves (and two of the three main chapels) are woven into the enveloping pines. Furthermore, nearly all footpaths and roads follow the undulating topos. The few formal, axial, processional 'ways' that have been designed to interconnect and approach the chapels have nevertheless also been subtly articulated. In all cases, the pathways are either narrow slices through the forest or earth-bound paths lined with trees and/or graves. A retaining wall formed of the site's natural stone defines the cemetery's boundary to the surrounding suburb.

II.A. Forest and Clearing

It is not only within *Tallum*'s physicality that the importance of the forest is made manifest, but it is also in the design's naming: in *tall* meaning 'pine'. Although previous research points out National Romantic affinities to this naming and its Latinising 'um' suffix,[16] *Tallum* must be understood foremost, in the context of this paper, in its most primal sense: as *pine*. Read as such, it can be comprehended as the architects' unspoken yet adamant declaration to reaffirm the land's primordial pine forest and pine tree. Lewerentz and Asplund's winning proposal preserved so much of the existing forest that the competition jury's one main objection was to the pines' total dominance; monotony and uniformity. The call for "wider and more

open clearings"[17] and a more formalised, tectonic reworking of the ground deserves careful consideration here because it can be seen to reflect the wider cultural currents of the time. These objections externalise how society's prevailing conception of nature (as embodied in the jury's comments) was primarily informed by the modern fear and avoidance of death. The fact that the jury envisioned the forest's omnipresence as potentially "merciless and frightening" can be seen to echo society's tendencies to equate nature — uncultivated nature — with death, melancholy, and the sublime.[18] Despite beginning transformations in societal views, nature was still perceived, for the most, as a sanitary aesthetic mask — as a medium for holding death's inevitability at bay. The jury's comments were related more to purely functional and aesthetic approaches than to ontological concerns.

Positing that the architects were looking to the pine in its most primitive essence[19] — as tree and forest, as both symbol of the pagan World Tree (*Yggdrasil*)[20] and symbol of the primeval forest (*Urskog*) — this paper will now argue that, for the architects, *Tallum* was perceived as the ultimate domain of regeneration. *Tallum*, as *pine*, can be understood to stand for both the paradigmatic notion of the individual tree (being symbolic of all vegetation), and for the forest made of many trees (being symbolic

of nature's eternal, regenerative properties). In this polysemic reading of *tall* dwells the tension of belonging partly to the paradigm of the forest and partly to the actual forest itself. *Tallum*'s ritualised topography has been designed to confront one with death, so that they may come to terms with death... and ultimately to renew attitudes towards life.

The championing of the primordial by Lewerentz and Asplund must not be misunderstood as attempts to combat urbanity nor to create an *Ersatz* for it; as it was for Romanticism's philosophising-poets, artists and architects,[21] for example. The architects were clearly receptive to the era's art,[22] though they can be seen to diverge from it by not having represented nature and humans in ominous opposition to each other. While the articulation of *Tallum*'s forest recalled the modes of being of Sweden's earliest peoples, it also approved and introduced the reality of the human-fabricated world of modern culture into its continuum. Hence, to maintain and move within Tallum's primordial ground was not entirely a nostalgic longing for the past. Rather it was about seeking and supporting an ontological mode of being. And begin akin to ancient Viking grave-fields, it was about living with, and accepting, the reality of death; that is, death as an extension of life. Lewerentz and Asplund were neither

positing nor planting an attack of nature over culture,[23] but were instead preserving, recovering, and privileging what they saw to have always been there: primordial ground *in illo tempore*.[24] Moving in relation to, and within, a horizon of a rich mytho-poetic past,[25] Tallum's forest was regarded as sacred by virtue of its tradition — a tradition that was understood to long precede human history and extend before the gods.[26] As hallowed ground, the primeval forest's sacred depths were sought as dwelling place(s) by the gods.[27] And by minimally clearing the land, it is as if the architects were silently proclaiming — reminding — that salvation and authentic *being-in-the-world* are situated foremost in the deep past of primordial ground, not solely in the historical past of cultivated ground alone.

There are three main conditions where clearings have been introduced into *Tallum*'s forest, and which merit deliberations: in the smaller burial glades; in the areas of the crematorium complex and chapels; in the area surrounding the 'Grove of Remembrance' mound, and extending to the Chapel of the Holy Cross and crematorium complex. In the first two instances, the forest has been carved into prudently. When it became necessary to remove some pines in order to situate graves, buildings, or to provide more light to the forest floor, deciduous trees were (re)planted nearby. This (re)

planting could be read as an attempt to hold the human-fabricated world of culture at a distance. Yet, since the reforestation was in itself cultivation, it must instead be perceived as a way of reintroducing cultivated ground into primordial ground, and life into the realm of death/rebirth. In *Tallum*'s forest, 'original' tree(s) and re-forested tree(s) — the symbolic and the literal — cohabitate in an agonistic field of conflict and synthesis. Deciduous bodies represent the temporal/mortal, whist the conifers represent the eternal/primordial. Nature's cycles[28] come to the fore as reminders of the equality had in the necessary death of all "back into those things from which they came";[29] the equality in life/death... a sort of social and cosmic *jämlikhet*.

The third and most consequential clearing — occurring between the 'Grove of Remembrance' mound and the Holy Cross Chapel and crematorium complex — establishes the possibility for a constant movement, both actual and symbolic, between death (represented in both the deceased body and the buildings as a receptacle of death) and new life (represented in the mound, grove, and nature's regenerative properties). Here, figure and field are set into a dialogue *through the ground*. This clearing yields absolute prominence to the mound and to the mound's symbolism of new life; whilst the chapel and crematorium

complex sit in the valley, symbolic of death. The architecture mediates the boundary between forest and clearing. Like the burial glades, this clearing — which makes way for the quasi-cultivated, quasi-urbanised nature of the mound and grove — also represents a welcoming of the site's primordial ground on civic terms.

II.B.   Mound and Valley

Even more so than with(in) the forest, it was in the actual ground of the site itself — most readily in the situation of the 'Grove of Remembrance' mound — that the architects struggled to establish a basis for an ontological understanding of ground and more authentic mode of being. In the mound, which evokes Scandinavia's prehistoric burial tumuli (*domarringar*)[30] and the borough moot (*tingställa*),[31] the renewed attitude toward death and the search for *jämlikhet* have been given their most articulate — and archaic — expressions. Like the prehistoric tumuli, *Tallum*'s mound symbolises regeneration within the earth; the preservation and regeneration of single bodies as much as a communal body.

The Holy Cross Chapel is situated in the clearing's valley, the former site of the gravel pit. The ground's undulating topos (a descent begun at the mound) flows into the concave floor/ground of the Holy Cross Chapel. And at the nadir of the chapel lies the catafalque,

where the deceased is lowered for cremation at end of the burial rite. This descent-point is defined by a void into the earth's darkness. Reciprocal to this downward movement is the skyward movement of the mound. These antipodes are physically connected by the unbroken curvature of the topography, and connected visually by the massive opening in the chapel façade. It as if this gesture signifies that as the body descends inside the chapel, its soul simultaneously ascends through the aperture at the centre of the Remembrance mound's grove of trees. The valley, being linked with death, holds all things corporeal in her bosom, while the mound rises as a symbolic harbinger of regeneration and rebirth. This two-way tensional dynamic between valley/mound (earth/sky), is brought into equilibrium through the ground's continuity. The topography's ascent – from chapel, to mound, to tree(s) – can be seen to embody the ritualised movement from funeral, to interment, to resurrection. Moreover, it may be seen to mediate a lifting progression from the fear of death to the promise of regeneration.

This notion of equilibrium must also be connected back to a discussion of equality, and to the fact that *Tallum*'s mound was designed not only to be seen, but also to be seen out from; to be accessible by mortals. *Tallum*'s mound, like an ancient burial mound, can also be seen as a 'sacred centre'[32] that

encourages human participation. *Tallum*'s mound is not intended as a privileged seat solely for the Divine. Being mimetic of pagan *tingställar*, it is on occasion meant to be cohabitated by mortals, in order to afford mortals the possibility of momentary communication with the dead and/or Divine. In the design of *Tallum*, mourners are encouraged to meander to the mound's apex and stand amidst the grove — and this must ultimately be seen as a gesture of *jämlikhet*. Yet, the fact the architects articulated the mound to imply that cosmic connections can occur via the individual alone — that is, devoid of culture's greater structure, which enabled intercession at the time of *tingställar*, for example — can be seen to reflect modernity's[33] lack of proper mediation in general. The design of Tallum's mound affords absolute freedom to the individual. However with this emancipation also comes the onus of having to mediate the World alone.[34] Perhaps it is exactly this plight — the need for a more fully mediated understanding of World – that the architects were actually challenging us to remember and experience with(in) *Tallum*'s mound.

On one level, the mound's grove speaks of a *jämlikhet* found in the harmonic tension between primordial and cultivated (socio-political) ground. The architects retained the site's primordial topography, yet cultivated its top with a clearly human-made, square-formed grove. On a deeper level, the trees speak of an equality inherent in human finitude. Standing solemn and dignified, the grove presides over the entirety of *Tallum*. Each tree, standing surrogate for the absent-present elders of Sweden's primordial past, mediates between earth and sky.[35] It can thus be argued that the architects have situated these deciduous trees chiefly as reminders of cosmic justice[36] and of *jämlikhet*. The trees' branches weep towards the ground, as if to communicate — remind — that all things arise from, and return to, the earth. Each tree, as arbiter, is Time. And the law they proclaim — waning occurs following a fixed span of growth, then death balances birth — is silently manifested in nature's continuous temporal pendulum of life, death, and renewal.

III. Lacking Authentic Ground in Modern Christianity

In the design of *Tallum*, Christian symbolism and iconography are negligible and unfulfilled. Since the architects privileged the site's primordial ground as the principal medium of symbolic representation, the notion of Christian ground is ambiguous and fragmentary. Therefore, Christian ground must be discussed here as the architects dealt with it in praxis: not so much as ground, but as a series of fragments within the wider primordial topography. Spanning from the competition sketches to the realised design of *Tallum*, Christianity (as an institution) has been reduced to a handful of biblical place names and dogmatic, ecclesiastical freestanding objects within the site's primary clearing. To reach a deeper understanding of the ontological implications of situating Christian eschatological fragments within the greater context of a primordial understanding of nature-as-regenerator, *Tallum*'s Christian ground must now be considered in terms of two major fragments: [A] 'The Way of the Cross'; [B] 'The Resurrection Monument'.

III.A. The Way of the Cross

The competition sketch for 'The Way of the Cross' drawn by Lewerentz depicts a narrowly winding footpath, slowly climbing through the mysterious darkness of the burial glades. At the path's beginning stands a large, leaning, wooden cross. The path can be seen to be simultaneously Christian and pagan; fusing the *Via Dolorosa*[37] and *Via Appia*[38] within the primeval forest. Here, representations of all levels of the ontological continuum – graves, mourners, cross, trees, etc. – are intended to coexist within the greater regenerative body of the forest.

The situatedness of the cross can be read as the architects' declaration that Christian redemption and rebirth are to be understood only as part of the primordial's

deeper promise of salvation. According to the sketch, it is within the forest, moving ritually towards the chapel, where death can truly be confronted, loss accepted, and the hope of new life (re)instilled. Lewerentz drew the cross as a tree-amongst-trees situated within the forest's greater entity. In this image it is as if the 'original tree' from the Garden of Eden, which later became Christ's crucifix, is still metamorphosing — via nature's regenerative cycles — into becoming a perfectly upright, mediating tree once more.

The position and articulation of the cross and path in Lewerentz's competition sketch would subsequently undergo several revisions. When Asplund was later appointed sole responsibility of designing the Holy Cross Chapel and crematorium, he also inherited the dilemma of 'The Way of the Cross'. Asplund's situating of the cross became even more groundless: being transformed at one stage into a granite obelisk and in another stage being complete removed. This uncertainty can be seen to be indicative of the place of Christianity within Sweden's cultural climate at this time.

Asplund eventually returned to the cross several schemes (and decades) later, and the path was again named 'The Way of the Cross'. As realised, this externalises the architects' anxieties in dealing with the Christian fragment within a wholly other framework:

where true authenticity and salvation were seen as being embodied in the depths of primordial ground. The realised Way, like the competition sketch, slopes slowly upward towards the chapel. Sinking into the ground, grass pushes up between the irregular paving stones. Like the forest and mound, this path is concurrently primordial ground *and* cultivated ground.

Contrary to Lewerentz's initial sketch, the realised Way is axial and fully devoid of its forest setting. The once leaning, wooden cross was transformed into a perfectly upright, monolithic, black granite cross. It became 'The Great Cross' — yet it signifies neither the path's beginning nor end. It stands prominently ambiguous and free-floating, right before the great portico, in tension between the Holy Cross Chapel and the mound. The materiality of 'The Great Cross' has been inherited from its transitory design phase as a monolithic obelisk. More importantly, this overly explicit monumental articulation should be understood as a consequence of the architects having placed so much symbolic weight on – in – primordial ground. The symbolism embedded in the mound's mass could, in the end, only be countered with such a literal interpretation of mass as manifested in the cross' granite materiality.

III.B.   The Resurrection Monument

Since its very beginning, John Lundqvist's statue called 'The Resurrection' was approached by the architects as a fragment. It was created in 1908, completely independent of any connection to the cemetery, and it only first came into the realm of the public eye – and into *Tallum*'s primordial ground – after being displayed at the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition in a special section dedicated to funerary art. Contemporary art critics heralded Lundqvist's statue as representing the spirit and pathos of the times, and proposed it be erected in *Tallum*.[39]

Subsequent to the public's favourable responses to 'The Resurrection' monument, the cemetery committee asked the architects to suggest a location within *Tallum*. Faced once again with the problem of the Christian fragment, devoid of any contextual ground, the architect(s) struggled for almost a decade before locating the monument where it stands today: at the centre of the great portico's impluvium. Just as the need to be utterly literal with 'The Way of the Cross' naming, the portico was subsequently named 'Monument Hall'. Words were again made to bear the weight – the meaning – for the symbol that no longer could.

The statue, pregnant with symbolisms of Christian rebirth (three vertical figures ascend, resurrected atop three horizontal

purgatorio figures), is positioned in direct reciprocity to the 'Grove of Remembrance' mound. The dialectical tension in-between these two figures' differing notions of salvation is held in equipoise through the continuity of the ground. The portico is articulated as an inverted mimesis of the square-formed grove of trees atop the mound. The mound rises, yet its movement is ultimately downward, back into the earth; as we are reminded by the trees' weeping branches. Conversely, the portico lies in the valley with a concave floor and a skyward-pointing roof. At the grove's centre is a *void* yielding to the ground and to 'salvation in the earth'; whilst at the portico's centre is the *solid* of 'The Resurrection's' salvation.

The overall irresolute manner in which the architects were left to deal with Christian symbolism at *Tallum* illustrates modernity's prevailing problem in addressing the current cultural situation in any decisive way using Christian tradition. It also reflects the dilemma arising out of the architects' extreme privileging of the site's primordial ground above all else. It was almost as if the architects were positing that if they got the ground right than they didn't need anything else. In the end, the only place left for Christian dogma in Tallum is as fragments – as a few scattered objects floating groundlessly in the modern clearing.

IV.   Conclusion

A state of groundless-ness within wider culture drove a search for authenticity in *Tallum*'s actual ground. In a most basic sense, the salvation of culture and the means for a more grounded mode of being were seen to be lying tacitly and latently in the sacrality of the earth. The background for such groundless-ness has been seen in other, wider attempts to recover ground; such as those in the domain of early twentieth century socio-political and spiritual reforms that were aimed at recovering a more equalising and authentic existence. Lewerentz and Asplund's extreme privileging of primordial ground can be seen as being indicative of the wider culture's principal reliance on social ground; society's reliance upon socio-political 'equality' reforms as a way to re-establish lost ontological ground. This resulted in fragmentation, which typified a breakdown of a fully mediated ontological continuum in modernity.

But ultimately the architects' dilemma is more fundamental and much deeper. Through their extreme preoccupation with the site's pervasive nature, it has been argued that the architects understood authenticity to reside foremost within the ground – in its most actual and primordial sense. Because of this understanding, the ground itself has been invested with meaning. However, with meaning normally comes increased articulation, at a level which consistently attempts to break free from the dumb and primordial; thus neutralising the significance invested in the earth as unshaped and archaic ground. As a consequence of this unremitting – and almost viscous – circle, *Tallum* exists as an agonistic ground of tensions, mediated by a constant interplay of conflicts and syntheses. Within this ongoing exchange lies the fundamental dilemma with which the architects were invariably faced when creating this syncretic typography.

1. Wilfried Wang, et al., *Architect Sigurd Lewerentz: Photographs of the work & Drawings*, 2 vols., ed. Claes Dymling, Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1997; Bengt O.H. Johansson, *Tallum: Gunnar Asplund & Sigurd Lewerentz's Woodland Cemetery in Stockholm,* Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1996; Caroline Constant, *The Woodland Cemetery: Towards a Spiritual Landscape*, Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1994; Peter Smithson, et al., *Gunnar Asplund 1885-1940*, *The Dilemma of Classicism*, Architectural Association, London 1988, and *Sigurd Lewerentz 1885-1975*, *The Dilemma of Classicism*, Architectural Association, London 1989; Janne Ahlin, *Sigurd Lewerentz, Architect 1885-1975*, Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1985; Stuart Wrede, "Erik Ginnar Asplund 1885-1940", in *Global Architecture*, n. 62, Tokyo 1982, and *The Architecture of Erik Ginnar Asplund*, 2nd ed., MIT Press, Cambridge/Mass. 1980

2. Since 1994 *Skogskyrkogården* has been included on the UNESCO list of monuments to be preserved in the event of war.

3. "Earth is that which comes forth and shelters. Earth, irreducibly spontaneous, is effortless and untiring. Upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world. In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth." (Cfr. M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, Harper Collins, New York 1993, pp. 171-172)

4. Cf. M. Heidegger, *and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans.

Joan Stambaugh, Harper & Row, New York, 1972, pp. 239-242; 348-350

5. Cfr. C. Hallendorff, *History of Sweden*, Cassell & Co., London 1929, pp. 382, 423

6. One of the most famous prophets of this existential crisis that was coming to the Western psyche at this time was Nietzsche: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." (Cfr. *The Gay Science* (1882, 1887) para. 125; Walter Kaufmann ed., New York: Vintage, 1974, pp.181-82.) Likewise the writings of Rilke and Jung are extremely revealing of the zeitgeist as well. For example, in the *Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud*, Philip Rieff describes the totality of the Jungian project as being a pre-emptive attempt to avert a collective crisis of the spirit by providing the western world with a new type of religion; one grounded in inner symbols that people could place in the centre of their psychological lives. Reiff further explains that even today this remains an ongoing project — having yet to have saved us from existential crises. (Cf. *Triumph of the Therapeutic*, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Delaware 2006)

7. Sweden's cremation movement can be seen directly linked to that of industrialisation. The Industrial Revolution, and its expanding urban populations, reached Sweden between 1850 and 1870. Following German precedent and contemporaneous to the 1882 change in the Lutheran doctrine, the Swedish Cremation Society was founded to help ease the problem of the cities' over-crowded churchyards.

8. Here I draw on Martin Heidegger's secularised account of *authenticity* as a type of understanding, which results from addressing the anxiety of one's own mortality, i.e. being as a *being-toward-death*. Only facing and accepting death allows one's (Da-sein's) entire relationship to the world to be transformed – allows for authentic existence. (Cfr. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, [348-350], pp. 319-321.)

9. Cfr. W. Kandinsky, "*Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Painting in Particular 1912*", in *The Documents of Modern Art,* 5, George Wittenburn, New York 1955, p. 26

10. The architectural programme explicitly called for a 'Vault of the Dead' leading to a 'Hall of Life', where an overhead gallery would surround and ease the mourners with choral music. The catafalque was to be aligned toward the East – the rising sun, and symbol of new life – and was to take precedence over the altar as the focus of the design. (Cfr. A. Schmarsow, "Utdrag ur arkitekernas beskrifning till krematorie i Helsingborg", *Teknisk Tidskrift: Arkitektur*, (1914), p. 117; Gustav W. Schlyter, *Die Feuerbestattung und ihre kulturelle*

Bedeutung: Der Temple des Friedens, Lepzing, 1992, with an introduction by Georg Hanning, Director of the Municipal Cemetery of Stettin (now Szcecin), and a postscript by Oswald Marcuse, King's Counsel, Berlin.)

11. Cfr. A. Schmarsow, "*Utdrag ur arkitekernas beskrifning till krematorie i Helsingborg*" in *Teknisk Tidskrift: Arkitektur*, 1914, p. 117

12. This scheme was co-designed by Lewerentz and his (former) partner Torsten Stubelius.

13. Asplund and Lewerentz were already collegial, having studied together at the Klara School (1910). Prior to *Tallum*, both architects had practiced over seven years; having designed ecclesiastical, domestic and civic projects alike.

14. Stockholm's South Cemetery was the first in a series of municipal cemeteries to be built outside Stockholm. It's planning began in 1905, when the Cemetery Authority made apparent the imminent need to extend the Sandsborg Cemetery. In 1909, a plot of land adjacent to Sandsborg was reserved, and in 1913, the City Council officially approved the extension. An international competition for the design of the new South Cemetery was made public in September 1914, and had its deadline in March of the following year. Lewerentz and Asplund were announced as winners on April 1, 1915. For a detailed description of the competition results see: Nils Blanck, "Täflan om utvidgning av Stockholms Södra Begrafningsplats" (Competition for the expansion of Stockholm's South Cemetery), *Teknisk Tidskrift: Arkitektur*, (1915), pp. 43-68

15. Cfr. S. Lewerentz, "*Östra kyrkogården i Malmö*" in *Byggmästaren*, 1928, p. 188

16. Cfr. B. Johansson, *Tallum: Gunnar Asplund & Sigurd Lewerentz's Woodland Cemetery in Stockholm*, Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1996, pp. 16-18

17. N Blanck, "*Täflan om utvidgning av Stockholms Södra Begrafningsplats*" in *Teknisk Tidskrift: Arkitektur*, 1915, p. 44

18. Cfr. E. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Clarendon, Oxford 1978, p. 26

19. Although many publications have addressed *Tallum* relative to primitivism – stylistically – no research has yet looked at the word and meaning of *tall* in and unto itself, in its most indigenous and essential form.

20. In the Norse *Gyllfaginning*, *Yggdrasil* is the mighty ash structuring the cosmos, being continually destroyed and renewed. Every tree symbolises *Yggdrasil*, and every forest is sacred and magical due to its mediation between worlds. (Cfr. S. Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1964)

21. Cfr. B.M. Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, for an analysis of National Romanticism.

22. Specifically, the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) and Prince Eugene (1865-1947) would have been well-known known to Lewerentz and Asplund: Eugen's work was displayed in the 1914 Baltic Exhibition, and Friedrich's work was widely-published. Moreover, Lewerentz had been an architectural apprentice in Munich and Berlin, where Friedrich's work was often exhibited. I am not aware if Lewerentz ever read this quote by Friedrich or not, but include it in this note nevertheless for its affinity to this paper's analysis of *Tallum*: "To live one day eternally, one must give oneself over to death many times".

23. Cfr. O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Allen & Unwin, London 1926; C Constant, *The Woodland Cemetery*, Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1994, p. 172

24. Mirceau Eliade explains *in illo tempore*, or the sacred time that has always been there, as "a primordial mythical time made present." (Cfr. M Eliade, *The Sacred & The Profane*, Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego 1987, p. 68)

25. Concerning this return to mythical beginnings, confer W. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, Phaidon, London 1996, pp. 130-147

26. Cfr. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon, Boston 1958, pp. 186-188

27. Cfr. C. Tacitus, *Germania*, Heinemann, London 1970, p. 39

28. Lewerentz and Asplund included a musical score from Grieg's "The Death of Mother Aase" (in Iben's *Peer Gynt*) on their *Tallum* competition proposal drawings. This score, as Karin Winter has revealed, is from the scene where Peer is imaging his mother's mortal passage from earth to Heaven: "Aase... what is it rustling and singing so strongly wildly? Peer Gynt: It is the spruces, Mother, soughing on the heath. Just sit quietly." (Cfr. Edvard Grieg, *Peer Gynt Suite No. I op. 46*, in *Ibsen Plays: Vol. 6, Peer Gynt and The Pretenders,* translated and with an introduction by Michael Meyer, Methuen, London 1987, p. 20. Additional sources: Johansson, op. cit., pp. 18-19; Constant, op. cit., p. 176; Ahlin, op. cit., p. 15.)

29. According to Anaximader, there is no wastage – only equality – in physical change, from life to death. As one life passes from the earth, a new life is said to come into being. (Cfr. C. Kahn (ed), *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology*, Columbia University Press, New York 1960, p. 199 ff.)

30. *Domarring/domarhög/gravhög* ('judgement rings/mounds') were Scandinavia's Bronze and Iron Age burial mounds, which co-functioned as judgement courts. (Cfr. N. Herlitz, *Grunddragen av*

det svenska statsskickets historia, Oxford University Press, London 1939)

31. *Tingshög/tingställa* is Swedish for 'place/mound of the Thing' and 'borough moot'. (Cfr. *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*, Svenska Akademien, Göteborg 1999)

32. Cfr. M. Eliade, *The Sacred & The Profane*, p. 36

33. Addressing modernity and "the modern moral predicament", C. Taylor notes that in modern culture two frontiers have been added to the original theistic one: nature and self: "A modern who recognises both these powers is constitutionally in tension". (Cfr. *Sources of the Self*, pp. 383-390)

34. As discussed by C. Taylor, the notion of emancipation is principally characterised by the move towards inwardness and interiority both resulting from and leading to "the loss of substance of our contemporary man-made world." Emancipation involves a distancing from, and lack of participation in, the human-fabricated world of culture. (Cfr. C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989, pp. 497-501)

35. Cf. H.R. Ellis Davidson, *Ancient Peoples & Places: Pagan Scandinavia*, Thames & Hudson, London 1967, pp. 108-109

36. 'Cosmic justice' implies the necessary dissolution of all things back into their source of birth, making room for new life. There is no wastage – only equality – in physical change from life to death. (Cfr. Anaximander, *"Fragment 1"* in *The Presocratics*, Collier Macmillan, London 1966, p. 54 ff.)

37. Cfr. C. Constant, *The Woodland Cemetery*, pp. 40-41

38. Cfr. D. Porphyrios, *"Classical, Christian, Social Democrat: Asplund & Lewerentz's funerary architecture,"* in *Lotus International*, 38 (1983), p. 73

39. Cfr. G. Nässtrom, *"Utställningen: ett monument"* in *Stockholms Dagbladet*, May 23, 1930

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