Abstract

While troglodytic architecture has been widely documented in garden and decoration treatises, it has rarely been considered as having an architectural value since the Renaissance period. The focus of the discipline of history of architecture on the architect and his role as a constructor partly explains this neglect. In this article, I start by showing the way troglodytic architecture was theorized and understood from the Renaissance period. Artificialized grottoes constituted a set in which the visitor was supposed to feel transported in fantasy. In a second step, I present its reappropriation by contemporary architects as a dwelling solution respecting the Genius Loci and offering alternative solutions to face sustainability issues. A tentative explanation of the attractiveness of this architecture for owners and tourists is finally proposed. Such architectural shapes are actually more and more visible in blockbuster movies: the world of fantasy, however, has become a suitable place for habitat.

Reference


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Buried or Half-buried Contemporary Settlements
Between Fantasy, *Genius Loci* and Fiction
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Abstract: While troglodytic architecture has been widely documented in garden and decoration treatises, it has rarely been considered as having an architectural value since the Renaissance period. The focus of the discipline of history of architecture on the architect and his role as a constructor partly explains this neglect. In this article, I start by showing the way troglodytic architecture was theorized and understood from the Renaissance period. Artificialized grottoes constituted a set in which the visitor was supposed to feel transported in fantasy. In a second step, I present its reappropriation by contemporary architects as a dwelling solution respecting the *Genius Loci* and offering alternative solutions to face sustainability issues. A tentative explanation of the attractiveness of this architecture for owners and tourists is finally proposed. Such architectural shapes are actually more and more visible in blockbuster movies: the world of fantasy, however, has become a suitable place for habitat.


“No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other.” (Frank Lloyd Wright)

**Introduction**

“Nevertheless, even before the man and the animals had appeared on the earth, there was a certain shape of architecture, boorishly shaped by the elementary strengths of the nature, even before the water and the wind sometimes transformed into elegant structures. Caves in particular fascinate us: they were one of the first shelters of the man; they could well be one of the last ones. In any case, it is them whom the modern man, in his big foresight, chose to deposit the most precious fruits of his activity there: his administrative and economic archives.” (Bernard Rudofsky)

Since its origins, the Western theory of architecture has been developed as the art of construction and ostentation. It values the work of the architect, and places the latter as the only actor who embodies the architectural object. Retaking uncritically this perspective, the history of the Western architecture has for a long time only been a work of regurgitation and deepening of a very restricted architectural corpus.

In the foreword of the catalog of his exhibition *Architecture without architects*, Bernard Rudofsky denounced – with the self-assurance that his status of Museum of Modern Art’s curator conferred him at the time – the geographical, chronological and sociological limits of the history of the architecture. This pioneer in making vernacular architecture visible on the international scene rejected the way in which this discipline was taught. The misdeeds of the "architectural proliferations as an eczema rebels in any treatment"\(^3\) stemmed in his view from the focus on a narrow and forgetful historiography of the talents, and the lack of recognition of the skills of "the self-taught builders (...) to adapt with a remarkable talent their constructions to the environment in the time and in the space."

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1 Bernard Rudofsky, “Architecture sans architectes”, édition du Chêne, p. 2. I am grateful to Alice el-Wakil for the proofreading this paper.


3 Bernard Rudofsky, “Architecture sans architectes”, op. cit., p. 4
Fifty years later, at the age of globalization, it is finally possible "to break our narrow conception of the art to build by exploring the domain of the not codified architecture." Young architects are nowadays more and more inspired by the technical and philosophical lessons of the vernacular architecture. In this article, I suggest that this inexorable evolution can be understood as a shift of this type of anonymous architecture from the domain of the fiction and the fantasy to that of common practice.

**Cave and fantasy in the Western architectural tradition**

The Italian theory of the Renaissance associated the cave with architectural fantasy. The false caves aimed at imitating and overtaking the Nature at the same time. They were considered as places of fantasy, in which visitors should feel transported to an unreal and magical world.

The most exceptional example is probably Nero’s Villa Aurea, discovered while excavating the Mount Oppius, which was assimilated to grottoes. As such its fantastic so called “grotesque” design influenced the Renaissance and Mannerist set.

More generally, ornamented caves were built by artists and patrons in the cellars or ground floors of their palaces, country houses, or gardens, which explains why some descriptions of the construction of caves appear marginally in architectural treatises and more often in gardening theory, as well as sculptors’ and ceramists’ catalogues. Some Italian country cottages clearly display the magical and spectacular dimension of the cave. Montaigne himself was delighted by the fabulous garden of Pratolino, which contains the famous giant Apennines grotto. At Boboli, the cave is associated with the games of water and thus produces a considerable surprise effect. Splashed and flooded, the visitors are obliged to turn back.


The fifteen Florentine scholar, Leon Battista Alberti, was inspired by the way Ancient people imitated such caves in their cellars or underground passages: "The Ancient […] knew how to stick their

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4 Bernard Rudofsky, “Architecture sans architectes”, op. cit., p. 1
storerooms and underground cellars with rough crust specially made, a mixture made out of small pieces of pumice or some tiburtine stony foam [...], or how to add green wax to imitate more artistically the moss that grows in these hollow places.” He particularly liked one cave for its beautiful and refreshing water fountain and its surroundings decorated with beautiful conches of oysters and clams. One century later the French sculptor and ceramist Bernard Palissy described in his work Recepte⁶ small rooms in forms of caves, namely artificial places imitating the Nature.⁷ The cave of the Bastie d’Urfé is the unique remaining example of the XVIth Century in France. This theatrical place, decorated with natural elements such as pebbles, stalactites, and shells, constitutes a room of freshness with fountains hosting mythological figures.


The cave displays a dreamlike dimension, associated to the stay of gods and half-gods, mythical creatures or hermits, close both to the divine and the nature. The artificial cave, built by men, is a way of short-lived entertainment that takes the civilized men back to Nature and artificially makes them experience the delight of natural state. It aims at surpassing the natural cave by the accumulation of the most beautiful natural decorative elements taken both from the marine and earthen universe. Such artificial caves are however not a priori imagined for the everyday life. Places of whim, magic and

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⁵ Leon Battista Alberti, “Les dix livres d’architecture”, chapter IV (my translation) : « Les Anciens pareillement savaient plaquer leurs celliers et caves sous terre de croûte rude faite exprès, entremêlées de morcelets de pierre ponce ou de l’écume de pierre tiburtine, qu’Ovide appelle de ponce vivemis encore en ai-je vu où il y avait de la cire verte pour feindre plus artistement la mousse qui provient en ces lieux creux : et entre autres me plaît bien fort une que je rencontrai d’aventure contre une spelunque ; car, en son fond, sourdait une belle fontaine d’eau fraîche, et alentours étaient appropriées force belles conques marine d’huitres, palourdes, virelz, et semblables parties renversées, partie l’une sur l’autre entassées, d’un artifice très plaisant pour la diversité des couleurs d’entre elles naïvement représentées ».  

⁶ Bernard Palissy, “Recepte véritable par laquelle tous les hommes de la France pourront apprendre à multiplier et augmenter leurs thèsors. Item ceux qui n’ont jamais eu connaissance des lettres pourront apprendre une philosophie nécessaire à tous les habitans de la terre. Item en ce livre est contenu le dessein d’un jARDIN délectable... Item le dessein et ordonnance d’une ville de forteresse la plus imprenable qu’homme ouyt jamais parler”, La Rochelle, 1563, 132 p.  

delight are intended to take visitors in an extraordinary, afterlife world inhabited with mythological figures or divinities, not to function as a home.

Has the contemporary buried architecture preserved some aspects of this classical Western approach to the artificial cave? This could explain the generalized lack of esteem for the cave as an appropriate solution for human settlement. Troglodytic realizations have for instance rarely been acknowledged as ‘real architecture’ till recently. Not highlighting and making the work of men, and especially of the architect, visible they were rather (dis)considered as a production of Nature. But as plenty contemporary dwellings and touristic realization show, this period might be over for troglodytic architecture, which is gaining importance as a sustainable source of inspiration.

**When reality overtakes fiction**

Does Matteo Thun produce something totally new when he builds the 2009 Hotel Bella Vista, Trafoi, in the National Park (Reserve) of Stelvio in Italy, which consists of 13 half-buried units? Any built architecture would have violated the integrity of this magnificent place. Each of his units is covered with a vaulted roof, which fits into the hills. The revegetation of these roofs creates a symbiosis between the natural surrounding landscape and the built roof landscape. According to Thun, the latter evokes dunes and hills and thereafter harmonizes ideistically with the landscape. A glass façade turned towards the slope and the landscape widely lightens each unit.

Preliminary sketch of Hotel Bella Vista, Trafoi, by Matteo Thun

On his website, Matteo Thun claims that he obeys to what he calls *Genius Loci*: “Architecture has a teacher, the Genius Loci. The spirit of the site, with its cultural and historical background, its climate and morphology, its flora and resources, determines the creative process of Matteo Thun & Partners. Through the respect of these aspects and a combination of tradition with technology, an ecologically and economically sustainable architecture of durable aesthetic value can be generated. The
site becomes protagonist, the building its tribute.” Thun considers the mimetic effect produces by his half-buried units as the best way to respect the Genius Loci.

But what is exactly the Genius Loci, or genius of the place in Latin? The anthropologist Laurier Turgeon deals with this question in a communication entitled *The Spirit of the place: between the material and the immaterial. Presentation of the theme of the colloquium.* Turgeon reminds that *Genii Loci* are immanent beings in the Roman mythology, which were considered as protective beings living in such places as caves, rocks, mountains, rivers or trees. Similar supernatural beings and occult forces can also be found in several other mythologies, notably in Africa and India. Since the Enlightenment, the genius of the place has been secularized, and we started speaking about the spirit of the place to evoke the harmonious relationship "between very diverse-geographical, historic, social and esthetic factors to reach a good arrangement on the scale of the men." Turgeon explains that the genius of the place has become the spirit of the place defined as "a relational dynamics between material sites, landscapes, buildings, objects and immaterial manifestations, narratives, rites, festivals, know-how, physical and spiritual, which produce sense, value, emotion and mystery."

Secularized, the Genius Loci thus reduces the opposition between nature and culture, and gives a role to urban-planners, architects, or artists. However, this term was used in highly questionable ways. Understood in a perverted way, it enabled ‘the man predator’ to have an even bigger impact on landscape and to Nature in extensive ways. Matteo Thun, like many other contemporary architects, condemns this human omnipotence, and argues for coming back to a transcendental way of considering the world and the human in the universe. With humility, he rehabilitates the Genius Loci.

If he uses contemporary constructive techniques, Thun (together with Stelvio Park) aims at creating a symbiotic effect by dissimulating his architecture under the ground. Building in a way that safeguards

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the landscape qualities requires, in his view, that the architecture becomes negative: Rather than being added to the landscape, it should disappear in it. As critics have underlined, vegetated architecture constitutes a constructed as well as a dissimulated landscape. “The construction is not an invasive presence in the territory but interfaces harmoniously with it.”

The technique he uses is referred to as “building the slope.” The thirteen half-buried Thun studios are indeed placed in three staggered rows follow the slope in which they are built to create symbiosis with the surrounding nature. This construction technique, which respects the topography and the site, is inherited from ancestral ways of building. The Byblos fishermen primitive cells were, among many other examples form the high Antiquity, similarly inserted in the rocks circus that surrounds the Phoenician port since the Antiquity. These cells were partially excavated and partially built in the same limestone that was extolled during the excavation. Inhabited by poor fishermen, they were recently converted into a restaurant and a small hotel, which offers an outstanding view of the old harbor in Byblos. The Pepe's Fishing Club for instance occupies several old caves dating back to the Genovese Crusaders who came to Lebanon in the 11th century. Jumping forward several centuries, building the slope has been one of the main thematic of modern architecture of the sixties, especially in Switzerland, with for example the terrace dwellings of the sixties as Mühldalde in Umikon by AG Team 2000 (1962-1973).

Burying architecture underground and following the model of the cave is an experience that seduced some architects who began working in the 1960’s like Jean-Louis Chanéac (1931-1993), Pascal Haüsermann (1936-2011), or Antí Lovag (1920-2014). All of them were members of the Groupe d’Architecture prospective (GIAP), as well as Daniel Grataloup. In their so-called ‘architecture-sculpture’, they reinterpreted, nolens volens, the spatiality of the interiors of the caves through their own architecture. The interiors often look like grottoes, while the exteriors are either like bubbles – we speak about ‘architecture-bubble’ –, or totally visible or partially or totally buried. The use of cement gun and shotcrete on a metallic grid allows an unexpected flexibility and malleability of the form producing curves and vaults. Thanks to technological developments like concrete veils and shell structures, we can now imagine house-bubbles composed of grotto spaces and curvilinear architectural forms, a new revolutionary architecture going beyond the standards of functionalism and rationalism. Some people, like Joël Unal, think it could be possible for anyone to build his own house with shotcrete.

Recently celebrated in Lyon (France), Jean-Louis Chanéac built his own house above Aix-les-Bains. It is hard for the visitor to distinguish the construction in the steep landscape. Naturalistic forms and curvilinear volumes, coated with camouflage colors borrowed from the nature, translate the eager desire of integration of the architect. The study of polychromy is inspired by the mimetic attitude of animals: The house is like a chameleon. Chanéac describes the gestation period as a waking dream. He remembers that the image of a bean quickly came to him. Luckily, the pod of the bean married the shape of the cliff. A staircase tower was added, as well as two hazelnut rooms. The kitchen, dining-room, and bathroom looked like pees inside of the beanpod. Masonry consists of a structure in veil of concrete thrown on

13 “dhd architecture + interior design”, January 2010, p. 18
a metal skeleton. The average thickness of the concrete veils is 7 cm, the outside face of the concrete is cuffed.

From 1963 until 1969, Chanéac begins his first researches on the Villes Cratères to answer the urbanistic problems of his time. He dreams about a city where the “volumes would be diluted in a positive space,” where the street would have disappeared and the green spaces would be unlimited: A city without suburbs, urban and rural at the same time. Its Ville Cratère is an almost lunar landscape, an “artificial shelf” dug by residential craters and by canyons of traffic, which bound artificial hills. Canyons, which correspond to the ancient streets and follow the lines of force of the existing landscape, are devoted to the car traffic. The terraces of hills, turned to the craters, are shelter houses with individual terraces. Offices buildings, warehouses and workshops occupy the other hillside turned to the canyons.

Avid to break the monopoly of the industrialized and prefabricated functionalist architecture, the architects of the GIAP favored an architecture inspired by nature and established as part of the nature. Technology allowed mimetic effects, curves possibilities, while grottoes inspired spatiality.
The inclusion of the sustainable dimension really took place these last thirty years with the research on Green architecture undertaken in the US. The integration of the vegetation has become a real exercise to minimize energy loss. The bio-climatic performances of such architecture, sparing up to 30% of energy, shed the light on such experiences.

We can mention as a recent inheritance of these innovations the Peter Vetsch *Earth House Estate Lättenstrasse* completed in 1993, which interests us mostly because the houses are half-buried. This Swiss complex of nine residential homes typifies Peter Vetsch’s inclination for earth-covered architecture, which makes possible firstly to integrate convincingly a building into its environment and to return back to nature a good part of what the excavation takes away, and secondly to create a living
surface on the roof that shall arise alone with site-bound growth. Most of all the thermal slowness of these buildings covered with steppe black soil is really optima

The roof designs consist of sprayed-concrete domes with isolation and bitumen, on which the excavation’s material is added, that is to say about 40 to 80 cm landfill and humus. Some rooftops can be used as gardens; others are left as natural landscape. The viridescent mounds of earth have the homes tucked in beneath them, keeping them almost hidden. It creates the impression of stumbling upon a secret underground society that has balanced the best of modern design and energy-efficient living. Vetsch’s houses appear like cozy huts to live in, but are actually quite spacious inside. The estate includes nine separate homes of different sizes. There is even an artificial lake in the center, a subterranean parking lot, and room to grow vegetation on the property.

Considering that a layer of earth protects the houses, they have natural isolation during the winter and thus use only a third of the energy a normal house would consume. In the summer, they boast cool temperatures, making air conditioners and other forms of temperature modification devices unnecessary. Vetsch also prides himself about the natural integration of the homes without having to add or remove any extra land or compromise the integrity of the natural landscape. He says that they are "not putting a box on top of nature but making the architecture subordinate to nature, integrated."

Buried architecture and science-fiction

Architectural inventions like houses-bubbles and (half-)buried houses have often been compared to flying saucers or spaceships. It is certainly because fiction works have been inspired by such troglodytic sites and constructions like caves. Star Wars, the masterpiece of George Lucas and one of the most successful literary and cinematic creation, presents many such constructions. This galactic saga of the end of the seventies takes place in various sets, from those thought as most evolved like skyscrapers sets to the less evolved living in vernacular Tunisian architecture, like Tatooine, a traditional raw earth village, or the troglodytic site of Matmata. The Hotel Sidi Driss is the place where scenes from the Lars homestead in Star Wars were filmed in 1976 and 2000. It remains a hotel with simple accommodation of bedrooms formed from individual caves hollowed out from the rock and shared bathroom facilities. Visitors can either pay a day trip or spend a night and discover the other troglodyte dwellings in the

Vetsch’s houses in Dietikon ©https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dietikon_-_L%C3%A4ttenstrasse_Erdhaus_Peter_Vetsch_IMG_6127.JPG

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Vetsch’s houses in Dietikon ©https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dietikon_-_L%C3%A4ttenstrasse_Erdhaus_Peter_Vetsch_IMG_6127.JPG
neighborhood, still inhabited by local families. Seen from the sky, the site of Matmata and its craters presents analogies with the lunar soil such as we had been able to perceive it on all the television screens since the famous first step of Armstrong on the Moon.

Even if not listed as World heritage, Matmata is one of the most impressive troglodytic sites of the world. The fiction made this natural set known all over the world like a fantastic and an extra earthen site. Nevertheless, the troglodytic way of building that kind of patio houses so adequate to the hot climate of the southern Tunisia was simultaneously recognized as such a wise solution. On an urban scale, the crater idea was used for instance by Chanéac as previously seen. Fiction influenced reality and vice versa.

Among all the extraordinary worlds inhabited by invented creatures produced by the fiction, the Hobbit world of the Lord of the Ring is one of the most interesting ones related to our issue. The Hobbit’s houses, half or almost completely buried in the earth to house the small-size characters invented by John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) are unquestionably the most inspiring as an etymologically true essence of the troglodytic architecture. Incidentally the novel begins with the sentence: “In a hole lived Hobbit”.

Tolkien imagined the story of the Hobbits living in the wild for his grandchildren. The story is that of Bilbo, who is taken in a continuation of adventures by the magician Gandalf and 13 dwarfs in search of a treasure in the magic Mountain. The novel was adapted to the cinema by the New Zealander Peter Jackson through the trilogy *Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) and the second trilogy *The Hobbit* (2012-2014). The movies were shot in an idyllic preserved landscape of New Zealand. The set of Hobbiton, the village of Hobbits, is still remaining today and fans of the fiction as well as regular tourists can visit it22. The set decorator Alan Lee worked on the hills as if Hobbits had already begun excavations.

His work consisted in particular in building the facades for 37 hobbit holes and in designing the gardens and hedges. These Hobbit houses seem to be dug under the ground. The only visible architectural feature is the facade, which in many cases is characterized by the circular hole of the door and of the windows. Materials and techniques such as wood, bricks and half-timbered structure also emerge from the natural picturesque architecture, which has nothing to do with the glazed modernity of Thun’s Stelvio touristic units. Fictional architecture sets inspire, one movie after another real architecture.

The Hobbiton inspired many owners who wished to live in such an earthen naive and vernacular paradise, a kind of antithesis of the Western industrialized common way of life. The photographer Simon Dale has for instance built in 2003 an eco-home in Wales that he has designed himself like a hobbit hotel. With the help of his father-in-law Dale built his do-it-yourself home on a plot of land situated in a forest. He used plenty of sustainable materials, like scrap wood for flooring, straw on dry-stone walls, lime plaster instead of cement. He supplied water from a nearby river and added solar panels to this low-impact home built within four months. The amateur architect then built another eco-man-made house half buried in the Lammas Village, first Wale’s eco-development.
Trogloodyte dwellings: Fantasy or appropriate solution?

In the name of healthiness and hygiene, most of the populations still living in troglodyte dwellings after the Second World War were expelled by State authorities, like in Matera (1958). Several ancestral traditional and troglodyte housing formulae were sacrificed on the altar of technological progress and modern comfort. Less than half a century later, this trend is reversed. Buried or half-buried housing has become romanticized, valued, listed for artistic and historic reasons and finally gentrified, in particular by the tourist activity.

Their recognition as architecture sites is however not yet complete. While several troglodyte sites of architecture are now listed as world heritage, they entered it under the section of cultural landscape, not for their architectural shape. The brief description of Göreme according to Unesco mentions its landscape sculptured by the erosion, emphasizing the work of Nature: «In a spectacular landscape, entirely sculpted by erosion, the Göreme valley and its surroundings contain rock-hewn sanctuaries that provide unique evidence of Byzantine art in the post-Iconoclastic period. Dwellings, troglodyte villages and underground towns – the remains of a traditional human habitat dating back to the 4th century – can also be seen there.” The admiration carried in this heritage and the recognition of its sustainable qualities influenced the trend of the contemporary architecture so that nowadays the notion of architecture deprives itself of its constructive dimension to marry the subtractive and even burying dimension.

Everybody knows the severe impact that tourism can impose to beautiful sceneries and prospects all over the world. Important damages were caused in the name of tourism, like in the Costa Brava, or in the French Mediterranean or the Italian Adriatic littorals. The growing awareness for environment and sustainability issues since the nineties has led architects to explore more gentle hotels and touristic infrastructure solutions. The concrete buildings gave way to more vernacular interpretations among which the troglodytic architecture took an important part. Recently these experiences are increasing in
number and quality and offer tourists the opportunity to experience a unique way of life in the heart of the earth or, at least, in accordance with Nature.

Some troglodytic sites have been transformed in luxury hotels like in the *Canyon View* in Göreme (Cappadoce) or the Sassi of Matera, which is listed on the Unesco World Heritage since 1993. The Hotel *Il Sextantio della Civita* offers smart rooms taken in existing grottoes and traditionally furnished with old local furniture.

More interestingly, accommodations are also being built either underground, or at least with the desire of marrying the natural site without disturbing its environmental qualities. In so doing, the environmental care of the architects meets sustainability preoccupations. The very recent experiences of young architects show new directions relating to Nature and evocating some kind of caves. Thought as a temporary architecture devoted to tourism, *La Truffe* (Costa Morte, 2010), by L’Ensamble, which can host a family, looks like as a rough bubble from outside, and like a cave from inside, relying on a wooden structure. This ‘primitive’ architecture is inspired by the cave or grotto *topos* and gives an opportunity of living a kind of wild holidays, a life completely different from the conventional everyday life of a citizen. This experience is not that far from the one of the Motel de l’Eau Vive constructed by Pascal Häusermann in 1966-1967 near Raon. If *La Truffe* evokes the meteorite, the Motel looks like the fictional flying saucers of the Sixties.

![La Truffe](http://www.ensamble.info/#!truffle/c1f4p)

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Inner space of one of the cells of Häusermann’s Museumhotel near Raon
©http://www.museumotel.com/photos_archives.htm
Such experiments convey the changing mentality towards nature and environment. These hotels try to reflect and preserve the local resources. They embody a philosophy of architecture that acknowledges the supremacy of Mother Nature as well as the necessity for human creation to respect and co-exist with the planet. Architecture should not be conceived as a form dominating nature anymore, but as a form becoming landscape itself. From this perspective, underground and troglodytic architecture have an important role to play.

**Troglodytism and tourism**

How to interpret the interest of tourists in numerous existing troglodyte sites throughout the world? What are they looking for in these sites?

1) If part of the tourism experiment lies in disorientation, in the sense of being in an unknown or other environment, the return to natural conditions makes it possible to escape the industrial world and its constraints in terms of visual, sound, olfactory and atmospheric pollution. The troglodytic dwelling, like different vernacular housing environment of ancestral tradition, allows to experience exceptional original living conditions.

2) For the ecologically conscious tourists, the troglodytic experiment is an opportunity to test the advantages of the traditional bio-climatic minimal architecture. When seasonal apartments of 1000m² are built in Beirut for the emirs of the Gulf, to live in a restricted cell deprived from any unnecessary luxury is a way of wholesome return in the essentials. For this reason, we wonder if it is necessary to fall in the temptation to transform these housing into luxurious environments and to equip them with contemporary comfort tools like air conditioned, jacuzzi, swimming pool, a.s.o., as it can be seen in Oia (Santorini) or in Cappadocia. Some five stars hotels, like some ecologdes at the Lake Fayum or in Siwa (Egypt), encourage their hosts to give up on electricity and tap water in exchange for other values such as authenticity and beauty of the natural landscapes. The experiment of the way of living extends to the lifestyle.

3) What is really the nature of the tourism? What urges do human beings follow when they flee their comfortable everyday lives to devote to primitive experiments of life as to live under a tent or in an old village? Rudofsky already noticed the paradox of tourism: "Is not it paradoxical that, to protect his physical and mental balance, the city-dweller periodically has to escape from his housing environment endowed with all the technological improvements, to re-have a quick dip in what he calls the nature and to live in a primitive way in a hut, under a tent or, if he is more adventurous, in fishermen's village or in village strengthened abroad? In spite of its obsessive worship of the household electrical comfort, it is necessary to him to go without it to find the rest."25 The tourists are to a certain extent a nomad. They

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25 Bernard Rudofsky « N’est-il pas paradoxal que, pour préserver son équilibre physique et mental, le citadin doive périodiquement s’évader de son habitat doté de tous les perfectionnements technologiques, pour se
move from a place where they live mainly to a holiday home in the broad sense of the term, which shelters its seasonal activities connected to leisure and holidays. The institution of the paid leave by the middle of the XXth century favored this nomadism of the modern times that previously only concerned the favored class of population having city life in winter and countryside life during the summer months. After all, the tourist joins traditional semi-nomads, like Maymand inhabitants, who lived in their cave dwelling during winter and went away with their herds of goats to bivouac in the summer months. Transforming part of the troglodytic environment from housing to into tourism houses can appear, in this perspective, as a beautiful idea. New discreet hotel equipment that merge with the landscape can make the traditional troglodytic housing a tourism paradise.

To get back the bio-climatic receipts of the troglodytic architecture to instill a new inspiration to the contemporary architects is completely fashionable, and answers the new sustainable and ethical requirements that aim at reducing all around the world the ecological footprint. For this reason the architects of our time continue benefiting from the lesson of vernacular architecture in a general way and from troglohyte in particular.

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Bernard Palissy, “Recepte véritable par laquelle tous les hommes de la France pourront apprendre à multiplier et augmenter leurs thrésors. Item ceux qui n'ont jamais eu cognaissance des lettres pourront apprendre une philosophie nécessaire à tous les habitans de la terre. Item en ce livre est contenu le dessein d'un jardin délectable... Item le dessein et ordonnanse d'une ville de forteresse la plus imprenable qu'homme ouyt jamais parler”, La Rochelle, 1563.