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**“The hill belongs to its tortoises”: Paces of indolence/ Thoughts and associations after a pandemic “walk on borders”**

[Panos Panopoulos](#)

**Keywords:** Border, Time, Slowness, Walking

It looks like the navel of the hill, the epicenter of everything, extending in any possible direction. A good place to start walking or return for reflection.



An elegant piece of open-air, garden architecture, made of stone-tiles, used by visitors of the hill-park to write slogans of social, political, activist, ecological content, an anarchist stone-rotunda; no ups and downs here, no lefts and rights, all directions equal.



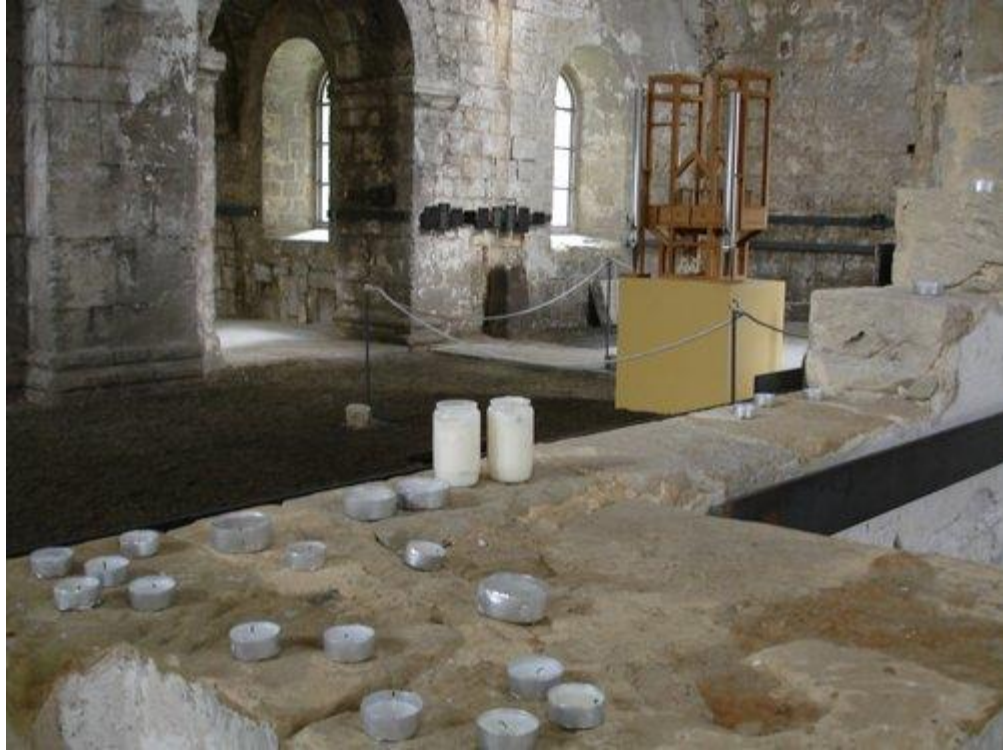
Among other slogans (“Magical life”, “arousal into disobedience”, “stop discipline”, “rebellion now”), we read: “The hill belongs to its tortoises”, which may faintly give to the whole circle the imaginary look of a giant stone-tortoise, or vaguely make you recall the Australian aboriginal paintings of the mythical ancestral creatures of the Dreamtime.

What is a tortoise, in human imagination, if not an idle way of moving, of walking ASLSP (“as slow as possible”)? Beyond Aesop’s didactic myth on the tortoise and the hare, as we learn it in school, in this case we are driven by an ideal sense of idleness, the presence of both real tortoises and a mythical-time creature that, moving slowly through life, outlive any human and most other animals.





Walking became the kernel of everyday life for many of us during the successive pandemic quarantines. Thoroughly creating our own itineraries in urban or country space, we looked for bodily and mental exercise, a relaxed view on things, the natural, the calm, or the awesome. The pandemic worked as a time-decelerator at most times, and a time-accelerator in others. It drew a borderline of sorts, between a before and an after, a perilous passageway, a neither-here-nor-there time-space, we had to go through; long enough to be calming and scary, a thick line between and betwixt our standard paces, an unavoidable everyday reflection on lifespan and duration.



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I recall a trip to Halberstadt, Germany, some years ago, a visit to the longest sound installation ever made. John Cage created the piece *Organ2/ASLSP* (As Slow as Possible) in 1987. "An organ in St. Burchardi church in Halberstadt in 2001 began a performance that is due to end in 2640. The next note will be played on 5th February 2024... The John Cage Organ Foundation Halberstadt decided to play the



piece for 639 years, to mark the time between the first documented permanent organ installation in Halberstadt Cathedral, in 1361, and the proposed start date of 2000..."(Wikipedia). The installation in Halberstadt takes the idea of the prolongation of time to its limits, disconnecting it from the timespan of any human life and the human perception of music, everyday routines, habits or activities. Metal plaques around the church-walls commemorate in advance the coming years of the performance, often quoting thoughts on time and duration.



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The year 2422 The year 2484



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From John Cage to the Lord of the Rings



There is always something to collect at every beach. After I moved to Piraeus, just before the pandemic, the most attractive pieces of self-made beach-art for me have been the old ceramic floor-tiles from old houses washed up by the sea; the waves and sea-currents have gradually softened the lines of their decorations, often of rectangular, sharp shapes, into pebble-shaped tortoiseshells of various colors and sizes, each one different from the other.

My slow walks around the city during the pandemic often revealed long processes of decay/ sustained time-sculpturing in old buildings left to the elements...



A pair of trousers turned into an eerie modern sculpture by pigeons' faeces over the entrance of a deserted old house in the center of Piraeus.





Some shirts were left behind, before the demolition of the house. They would stay hang there for many more years...

Back to the hill.



The column on top of the hill of Strefi, covered with graffiti. In the background, a view of the Acropolis.

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