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NICOLETTA ISAR ELEMENTAL CHOROLOGY – VIGNETTES IMAGINALES

This book is a second attempt to reinscribe throughout time Plato's chorology (the chorological discourse about *chôra*, 48e-53c in his dialogue *Timaeus*), which follows my first attempt in the 2011 book *The Dance of Adam: Byzantine Chorography*, which reinscribed *chôra* through dance, the ineffable moving trace of the originary matrix as revivified in Byzantine iconic inscription. The *Vignettes Imaginales* in this book focus on a precise theme of reflection within chorology: the elemental. This is an exercise of imagination in the sense that one could possibly dream of Plato's *chôra*, or long for such abysmal vision. The book's two parts, 'The Book of Tears' and 'The Book of Passions' are thought to fit the chorological frame and the elemental. The chapters move around the elementals as they manifest themselves within the creation as the fluid elemental, the round elemental carried by grace (*charis*), the dew and the magical charm, the aromatic recollection of Eden. Visions of the body and ground, *chortós*, *chôra*, and *chorós*, moving further into the pathos of the elemental, illustrate the passions of image and sound, from dazzling radiance and dazzling sonority, into the sonic stroke, and the choral phonophobia in contemporary video of Bill Viola. Tears are present not only as an eminent fluid elemental in the creation, but to evoke lamentation in the post-lapsarian imaginary. The subchapter "Choral Blast" addresses the dramatic moment of the fall of Adam, the cosmic moment that reinscribes chorology in history with the event of Adam's expulsion from Paradise, which is the beginning of his lament and his longing. This moment is imagined as a sonorous, cosmic event, in which various elementals participate in order to point to the invisible, yet audible, wrath presence of God: His thundering voice (*kol*), the divine breath (*ruach*) moving peripatetically around the demised Eden. This moment is chorologically reinscribed in *Adam's Lament*, the choral work of the acclaimed contemporary composer Arvo Pärt. The analysis aims to show how the elemental operates in music, and how the musical score, through chiastic disposition and the choral, generates most overwhelming effects, metaphorically described in the book as "drops of sound," "the tears of Adam." Emblematic throughout the book is the figure of Adam. Just as the *Byzantine Chorography* (2011) was devoted to the *Dance of Adam*, this book is devoted to the *Lamentation of Adam*, where Adam is understood not only as the forefather of humanity, but also as humanity itself. Adam is Man. Man is Adam. The book ends with a closing word on Empedocles' tragedy of the elementals and the exorbitant vision of his death that troubled the poet imagination of Hölderlin. Extinguished by fire, as in a Greek drama, Empedocles becomes one of his elemental roots.

CONTENTS: Introduction. I. The Book of Tears. 1. Fluid Elementals: Of Tears, Dew and Fire. 2. Round Elementals: Of Air, Charites, and the Dancing Chôra. 3. Subtle Elementals Breath and Grace. II. The Book of Passions. 1. Sonic Tropes of Passion: Blow, Blast, Sound. 2. The Materiality of Passions: Ambrosia and Tears, Magic Charm. 3. Three Lamentations of Adam: Drops of Sound – The Tears of Adam. **Epilogue.** Exorbitant Vision. The Violent Elemental – The Sacrifice of Empedocles. **Bibliography.** **List of Illustrations, Index.**

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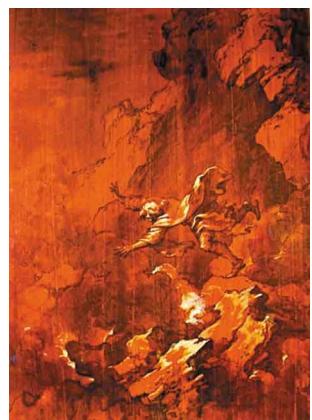
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Chorus at dawn in Livia's landscape
Villa Livia, Prima Porta, Rome, 30-20



The Dance of Columns in the Exedras of Hagia Sophia



Salvator Rosa, The Death of
Empedocles, c. 1665-1670