

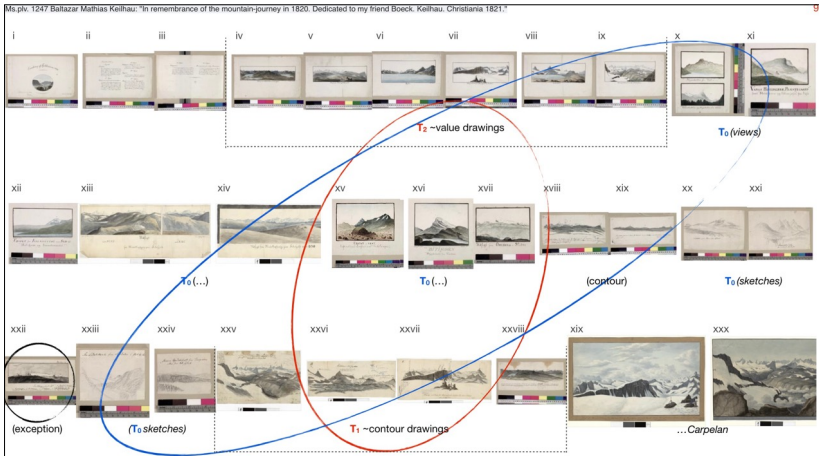


In both the atlas-excerpts—*above* and *below*—the viewer is guided into a space and time, *between* the book and the *archive*: or, it is possible to propose that the atlas, as a format in its *own right*, is defined in this way, that it is inaugural to *both* the book or archive (as *frontispiece* or *board*).

If accessing the manuscript as text—which is one take on reading—always requires this little bit of staging (cf, Agamben’s book [Profanations](#)), text as a generic free of access public writing does not really exist without it. But *text* appears to be blind to these scenographic prerequisites that it leans on.

*Neither* of the arrangements of Warburg’s *Mnemosyne* nor Keilhau’s *Fjeldreise* are chronologically linear. They are *visual*, contemporary and determined *tactile* regimes of handling. They are ready to rearrange at the call of any event that succeeds at summoning them: a *communicative* affordance.

Ma. ph. 1247 Baltazar Mathias Keilhau: "In remembrance of the mountain-journey in 1820. Dedicated to my friend Sioeck. Keilhau, Christiania 1821."



*Reading what has never been written* has yet another unexplored aspect. Books and archives have this in common: they feature readable elements that **1)** are deposited for the keep of the archive, and *a priori* available for reading [archives]; **2)** everything that makes the book *beyond* a manuscript.

With the Mnemosyne atlas, at the backdrop, it makes sense that both archives and books—given the essential non-public character of any manuscript in our culture—is the *board* as a visual *entry* to the manuscript. That is, before we read a manuscript we do that bit of *initial* staging.

A *scenographic* gesture that opens a reactive field that is sensitive to initial conditions: as the lightning-snake illustration on Steinberg's *aficionado* essay on Aby Warburg's Bellevue-lecture on his journey to the Hopi, his healing lecture that allowed him to cross the river and leave Kreuzlingen.

Both cases of money paid to the ferry-man to cross the river Styx: recalling the journey of Orfeus to Hades—the land of the dead—to retrieve Eurydice, only to send her back as he turned his head, when reaching the shore of the living. In some sense sacrificing love for scholarly curiosity and erudition.

The circumcised heart remains indebted to love. Which is one way of seeing that each time we consult a manuscript—whether archived or book-bound—we have to spend that moment of venerating the entry, and looking back as we close our session: with the book or at the archive. What about text?

Well, from this vantage point, it becomes clearly evident that the *text*—as the generic availability of a manuscript—simply does *not* exist. If public, it exists only in archives or in books. In one case, in a raw and unrefined stage. In the other case, manufactured: binding, end paper and board lacing.

With archive material, the exhibitivite affordance is as *is*. While with books it is everything down to print—typography and illustration—layout, and material qualities to the hand. The point being that given the difference between archives and books, they *both* are ruled by a visual/tactile protocol.

With digitisation, the experience of working with Norwegian geologist B.M. Keilhau's (1797-1858) boards from a mountain journey in 1820/-21, working with photographed copies online, during the c-19 pandemic in 2020/-21, required the gestures of framing screenshots and mounting the collection.

An extensive work of board-making—gathering the boards in a single view to gauge the collection as a [tiled](#) compound featuring an atlas of the journey, rather than individual drawings. Here the *composition*, *concert* and *memory* pitches how *messages*, *forces* and *movement* are played.

That is, how they communicate: *communication*. In the wake of the digital process it appears clearly that *visual tactile* process moves *from* the original document *to* extensive walkabouts in nature. Some more direct, seeking out the mountainous *sites* themselves, thereby linking the boards to a *survey*.