Ornament after the Orders: Percier, Fontaine and the Rise of the Architectural Interior in Post-Revolutionary France

by

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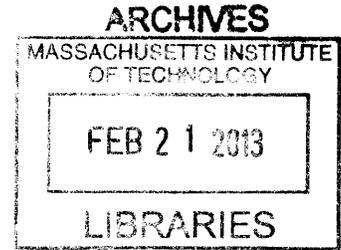
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the collaborative work in interior decoration undertaken by the French architects Charles Percier (1764-1838) and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine (1762-1853), in order to argue that their shared aesthetic positioned the interior at the crux of a modern architectural discourse no longer dependent upon a Vitruvian theory of the orders. Percier and Fontaine's influential decoration book, the *Recueil de décorations intérieures* (1801-1812) serves as my point of departure for investigating their idea of interior decoration and its engagement with the complex cultural milieu of France, circa 1800, from the end of the *ancien régime* to the rise of a militarized empire under Napoleon Bonaparte. Approaching Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration partnership from different thematic angles, this interdisciplinary study demonstrates their vital role in shaping the unexpected contours of modern architectural thought. Against the widespread revolutionary destruction of monuments, ornament, rather than the orders, ensured architecture's survival.

Percier and Fontaine's vision of the interior signaled a movement away from an architecture of monumentality towards one of mobility, a shift precipitated by the violence of political events, the disciplinary pressure of engineering and the emergence of new conceptions of history. Scholars have argued that the utilitarian techniques of engineering constituted the primary impetus behind the formation of a post-Vitruvian building culture in France. By contrast, Percier and Fontaine reaffirmed architecture's alliance with sculpture, painting and engraving, harnessing these artistic forms to new ends in their design practice. Through the *Recueil*, Percier and Fontaine claimed the interior—untouched by the spatial symbolics of the revolution—as architectural theory's proper terrain. Yet their publication simultaneously presented a fragile discourse of fragments, in which architecture was subject to the vagaries of fashion, commerce and history. Percier and Fontaine turned to their experiences designing theater sets in order to construct settings that would legitimize Napoleon's military conquests, beginning with the bellicose motifs at the château de Malmaison. Although the architects sought to colonize the interior as a site of Napoleonic power, it proved to be a porous and itinerant site of meaning that could not be claimed as the central domain of imperial force—or architecture— alone.

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Introduction

Sometime around 1800, Jean-Nicolas Louis Durand decided that architecture needed to be stripped of its classical vocabulary. Durand, a professor at the École polytechnique, the engineering school established in 1794, turned against the exegetical tradition of commenting on Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, the only architectural treatise to survive from antiquity. Architecture is not, Durand reasons, about the "columns, entablatures, and pediments, united to form what are known as the orders of architecture."[1] Nor is architecture's essence to be found in its origins, for example, in imitating the *cabane rustique*, or rustic hut, lauded by the abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier as architecture's most primitive and therefore ideal model.[2] No. Architecture, Durand declared, is really about necessity and utility. Architects should follow the principles of fitness, economy, and utility in the design of buildings, both public and private. Thus reducing architecture to the logic of the plan, Durand left little room for decoration and its associated pleasures. "Whether we consult reason or examine the monuments, it is evident that pleasure can never have been the aim of architecture; nor can architectural decoration have been its object. Public and private utility, the happiness and the protection of individuals and of society: such is the aim of architecture."[3]

The streamlined method found in Durand's *Précis to the Lectures on Architecture* (1802-5) has come to be seen as the inauguration of a modern architectural theory. The rhetoric of the classical orders was abandoned in favor of engineering's language of rationality and structural

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[1] Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis of the Lectures on Architecture; with, Graphic Portion of the Lectures on*

[2] Durand, *Précis*, 83.

[3] Durand, Précis, 84.

calculation.[4] Yet around the same time of the *Précis,* a decoration book sought to renegotiate the boundaries between the discipline of architecture and the broader cultural practices taking shape in Napoleonic France: the *Recueil de décorations intérieures,* or collection of interior decorations, published by Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine. Issued in installments from 1801 to 1812, the *Recueil* is comprised of 72 plates of projects for decors and decorative objects designed by Percier and Fontaine, explanatory texts and a preliminary discourse. How did decoration, the "most interesting, but least useful part of architecture," to paraphrase the eighteenth-century architectural theorist Jacques-François Blondel, conceptually reconfigure the interior and come to occupy such an central place in Napoleonic culture, even as theorists like Durand sought to banish it from architectural discourse?

This dissertation explores the partnership of the architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and their theoretical work in the interior, visualized above all through their influential book, the *Recueil de décorations intérieures.* The *Recueil* is commonly positioned as having initiated the Empire style, an extravagant form of interior decoration closely associated with the architects' most famous patron, Napoleon Bonaparte. Yet the publication did more than simply announce the official taste of the *Empereur des Français.* I argue that the images of a mobile and decorative architecture disseminated by the *Recueil* dismantled the notion of the interior as a site reflecting the *a priori* social status and identity of the patron.[5] Turning away from a language of monumentality, Percier and Fontaine claimed the interior as the domain where architectural theory could rule over the other arts, constructing an ideal

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[4] See Antoine Picon, "From 'Poetry of Art to Method': The Theory of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand," Introduction, in Durand, *Précis,* 1-68. See also Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), especially Chapter 9 on "Durand and Functionalism."

[5] Cf. Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin, *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-century Europe : Constructing Identities and Interiors* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010).

architectural subject through a language of decoration. Their vision of the interior was intimately shaped by and responded to the pressures and constraints placed upon architecture by the violence of recent political events, the disciplinary pressure of engineering and the emergence of intertwined notions of fashion, commerce and history.

Percier and Fontaine's significance for the architectural discipline has been neglected in favor of Durand, in part because they had such a diverse range of practices that are not easily categorized or not even considered "architecture." Previous scholarship has tended to focus exclusively on Percier and Fontaine's influence over the decorative arts. In Hans Ottomeyer's *Das frühe oeuvre Charles Perciers (1782-1800)* (1981), the first comprehensive critical assessment of Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations, the decorative arts historian delves into the early development of Percier's aesthetic, providing detailed "excurses" on the work of Fontaine. Percier's attention to different stylistic periods in his architectural and decorative projects marked one of the earliest instances of French historicism, which Ottomeyer understands as a form of artistic knowledge that anticipated emerging conceptions of history. The work of David Van Zanten first highlighted the architects' key role in a broader institutional context. Van Zanten showed that Percier's composition techniques were central to the pedagogy of the École des beaux-arts, while Fontaine played a key administrative role in the *Conseil des bâtiments civils.*[6]

Most recently, Jean-Philippe Garric's enriching studies have drawn new attention to Percier and Fontaine's contributions to nineteenth-century French architecture. In *Recueils*

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[6] David Van Zanten, "Composition from Charles Percier to Charles Garnie" in *The Architecture of the École Des Beaux-arts* (New York; Cambridge, Mass.: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by MIT Press, 1977). See also Van Zanten, "Nineteenth-Century French Government Architectural Services and the Design of the Monuments of Paris," *Art Journal* 48, 1 (April 1, 1989): 16–22 and "Fontaine in the Burnham Library," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 13, 2 (January 1, 1988): 133–145.

d'Italie (2004),[7] Garric underscores that Durand was not the only theoretician to have

transformed French architectural discourse around 1800. In his book, Garric argues that Percier

and Fontaine's Italian publications, notably *Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes dessinés*

à Rome (1798), introduced new historical sources and modes of representation that would prove

widely influential in French architectural publications of the nineteenth century. Breaking with

the Vitruvian tradition, Percier and Fontaine's books visualized the history and theory of

architecture for a broader audience than established humanist circles or the strictly pedagogical

context of Durand's *Précis*. Percier and Fontaine turned to domestic structures from the

Renaissance as models for the residences and homes that were being built for a new class of

consumers in post-Revolutionary France. Importantly, Garric's biography (2012) of the

architects has shown how Percier and Fontaine constructed a novel and complex partnership that

drew from the architects' diverse skills, combining Fontaine's entrepreneurial strengths with

Percier's talent in decoration. As I will discuss further, this partnership, which at times depended

upon Fontaine's courtier-like sociability and at other moments relied more heavily upon Percier's

artistic convictions, was instrumental in their ability to survive the political turbulences of French

history.[8]

　　While previous scholars have acknowledged the crucial role of the *Recueil de*

décorations intérieures in securing Percier and Fontaine's reputation, few have examined why

this decoration book — or "pattern book," as some scholars have mistakenly identified it[9] — was

so significant or how it operated within the broader social, cultural and political transformations

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[7] Jean-Philippe Garric, *Recueils d'Italie : Les modèles italiens dans les livres d'architecture français* (Sprimont, Belgique: Mardaga, 2004).

[8] Jean-Philippe Garric, *Percier et Fontaine: Les architectes de Napoléon* (Paris: Bélin, 2012).

[9] See for example, Hanno-Walter Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory: from Vitruvius to the Present* (London; New York: Zwemmer; Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 276. And also Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 154.

of the period. My project on Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations began principally as an

attempt at understanding the place of the *Recueil* in Siegfried Giedion's epic post-war text,

Mechanization Takes Command (1948).[10] In his critique of modernization, Giedion viewed the

Recueil as evidence of a trans-historical "spirit of mechanization" that marked technology's

eventual triumph over man, beginning in the nineteenth century. For Giedion, the Empire style

interiors found in the pages of the *Recueil* represented the annexation of architectural space by a

"ruling taste" embodied in the person of Napoleon. "This setting forms the backdrop to all

[Napoleon's] activity, yielding an intangible but ever-present resonance. The Empire 'style' is a

portrait of Napoleon, an inseparable part of the Napoleonic figure."[11] Giedion thus read the

Recueil as a direct translation of Napoleonic power. In this connection, he argued that Percier

and Fontaine's interior decorations devalued the meaningful symbols of antiquity, just as

Napoleon had "devalued nobility." Furthermore, in the representational effects of the *Recueil*,

Giedion saw the very disintegration of architectural space itself: "The decisive step toward the

nineteenth century in Empire style was the beginning of spatial disintegration. Furniture is

treated in the spirit of self-sufficient architecture. Pieces are often conceived as isolated entities,

and furniture loses its relatedness to the surrounding space."[12]

Extricated from the grip of Giedion's transhistorical spirit of mechanization, Percier and

Fontaine's work in interior decorations have much to say about the importance of ornament in

the architecture around 1800. On a fundamental level, the representational matrix of the *Recueil*

placed the interior at the locus of an architectural logic that sought to control the new social and

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[10] Siegfried Giedion. *Mechanization Takes Command: a Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948). Garric also considers Giedion's inclusion of the *Recueil* as playing a decisive role in the subsequent readings of Percier and Fontaine.

[11] Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command*, 329.

[12] Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command*, 342.

cultural practices emerging in post-revolutionary France that had undermined architecture's theoretical foundations rooted in the academy. Ultimately, I seek to emphasize the notion that interior decoration, far from being a marginal aspect of architecture, is what ensured its broader relevance in the context of post-revolutionary France. I will try to show that rather than isolating entities within a static space, Percier and Fontaine's designs depict, and are influenced by, a newly dynamic and mobile representation of the interior that precipitated a post-classical notion of space.

The title *Ornament after the Orders* is intended to evoke two entwined notions of order: the dissolution of a Vitruvian discourse of the orders and the end of the social order of the *ancien régime*. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, architects had depended upon both of these structuring principles for the basis of their theoretical justifications. As scholars have indicated, the languages of classicism deployed by the academy founded by Louis XIV and his minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert in the seventeenth century did not fall far from the absolutist tentacles of the French monarchy.[13] The orders became a central part of the academy's attempts to consolidate and codify a system of theory, which contained notions of decorum that were dependent upon the social hierarchies of the period. In this context, architectural ornament was to be used as a marker of status and rank.[14]

The French Revolution upended these hierarchies and encouraged the search for new sources of authority, rooted in the French nation and its people.[15] Painters grappled with the

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[13] Joseph Rykwert. *The First Moderns : the Architects of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), especially chapter 1, "Classicism and Neoclassicism."

[14] Although not all individuals felt the need to adhere to these architectural rules of order. See Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[15] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). The transformation of the political and social order already occurring in the ancien regime is of course the subject of a much more complex debate, which I do not have the space to discuss here. The classic source on the

problem of how to depict this new dispersed body politic.[16] Architects sought to articulate the

new republic's ideals of equality in built form. The monumental structures that students had

learned to design at the royal academy were adapted to the democratic visions of the new French

republic. It is in this context that Giedion's "devaluation of symbols" gains new significance.

For the clear decoration and ornaments placed on the buildings, legible to all, were to distinguish

the architecture of despotism from the enlightened buildings of the republic.[17] However, the

iconography and inscriptions reiterating the revolution's triumphs and victories *ad infinitum*

became a strange and meaningless amalgam, as Jean-Jacques Lequeu's mocking design for a

triumphal arch suggests [Figure 0.1]. In his design for a "Porte de Paris," Lequeu depicts the

"arch of the people" being sat upon by a colossus wearing a Phrygian cap and clutching a statue

of liberty, his legs casually draped to one side. For added emphasis, Lequeu depicts royal

emblems trampled by his giant club and feet. Lequeu's engorged decoration exceeds its

architectural setting, visually dismantling the monumentality associated with the form of the

triumphal arch. Percier and Fontaine's own work responded to the excessive demands placed

upon ornament "to speak" by reintegrating it into the decor of the interior. The architects'

method of disciplining ornaments not only came from compositional arrangements that

emphasized axial symmetry and repeating forms, but from knowing the specific historical

context from which decorative motifs were taken. Despite being identified as proponents of

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bourgeoisie and the origins of the French Revolution is Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution* [1856] (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On the significance of historiographic approaches to the French Revolution, see François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For architecture's role in the printed political debates at the end of the ancien regime and its relationship to Jürgen Habermas' notion of the public sphere, see Richard Wittman, *Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-century France* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[16] Susan Siegfried. "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France." *The Art Bulletin* 75, 2 (June 1, 1993): 235–258.

[17] Werner Szambien, *Les projets de l'an II : Concours d'architecture de la période révolutionnaire* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1986).

Neoclassicism, I argue that Percier and Fontaine were in fact turning to alternate conceptions of history that no longer privileged classical Greece and Rome alone as worthy of emulation.

History became a crucial ordering mechanism in Percier and Fontaine's interiors. A central theme of my research builds upon Ottomeyer's provocative assertion that Percier's work marked one of the earliest instances of historicism in French architecture.[18] Ottomeyer drew particular attention to Percier's methodology, noting that he was interested not only in ancient Greece and Rome, but also in monuments, artwork and artifacts — particularly architectural ornament — from other time periods. Percier sought to order these objects according to rigorous stylistic criteria. I connect Percier's interest in ornaments of different historical periods to the political exigencies of the period. Ironically, it was in the process of destroying the monuments of the past as a member of revolutionary committees that Percier gained his profound knowledge of historical ornaments. The knowledge he gained during the revolution, especially while working with Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des monuments français, enabled him to formulate decors that drew from historical sources beyond ancient Greece and Rome. The rich system of decoration that Percier and Fontaine created for Napoleon drew as much from the French monuments that Percier recorded while working with Lenoir as the ancient monuments that Percier and Fontaine studied together in Rome. The interior was an unarticulated space that had been neglected in the public projects of the revolution, which invariably privileged wide, open expanses as the symbols of freedom and equality.[19] The heteroclite sources of ornament that Percier and Fontaine drew upon fused together in the interior, undergoing a process of naturalization.

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[18] For later developments in architectural historicism, see Barry Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer: Historicism in the Age of Industry* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1994).

[19] James Leith, *Space and Revolution : Projects for Monuments, Squares and Public Buildings in France : 1789-1799* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

The interiors constructed by Percier and Fontaine for Napoleon form the ambivalent pre-history of the nineteenth-century interior as a *topos* of bourgeois domesticity and subjective interiority.[20] Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration practice fulfilled the contradictory exigencies of the Napoleonic regime in a way that monumental structures could not. According to Fontaine, Napoleon called architecture the "ruin of sovereigns."[21] And in the wake of his comment, it was interior decoration that followed the emperor across his military campaigns. Percier and Fontaine sought to carve out a space of representation in palaces and residences formerly occupied by monarchs and revolutionaries. Across Europe, it was in newly refurbished decors that Napoleon instated an extensive clan of family members and military elite to rule on his behalf. Out of Percier and Fontaine's practice emerged the material signs and symbols of new imperial power, from lavish ceremonies and furniture to the costumes of the imperial court. Yet even as Percier and Fontaine attempted to harness their interior decorations to an aesthetic discourse rooted in the principles of antiquity, the *Recueil de décorations intérieures* opened up the question of architecture to fashion, consumerism, and industrial production, the specters of modernity appearing at that strange historical horizon where capitalism had not yet taken hold.[22]

The development, condensation and deployment of Percier and Fontaine's theory of the interior are explored through three chapters, each of which adopts a different thematic lens. The chapters overlap thematically and are loosely chronological, spanning Percier and Fontaine's student period in the final two decades of the ancien régime, up until the end of the Napoleonic Empire around 1814. Chapter 1 explores Percier and Fontaine's education and the formation of

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[20] Charles Rice. *The Emergence of the Interior : Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*. (London: Routledge, 2007).

[21] Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, Résidences de souverains: parellèle entre plusieurs résidences de souverains de France, d'Allemagne, de Suède, de Russia, d'Espagne, et d'Italie (1833; reprint, Hildesheim: G.Olms, 1973), 106. "L'architecture, nous dit-il, a souvent été le fléau des États."

[22] Cf. Jürgen Habermas. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1990).

their partnership at the end of the eighteenth century. The development of their aesthetic, which

moved away from the models of classical antiquity, and the importance of the friendship they

forged with each other and with other architects, painters and sculptors are discussed within the

pedagogical milieu of the Royal Academy of Architecture and their shared period in Rome. The

chapter concludes with Percier and Fontaine's deep entrenchment in the political events of the

revolution and how their strategic partnership enabled them to survive and professionally

flourish in a volatile architectural market. The *Recueil de décorations intérieures* and the

reconfigured languages of decoration form the principal subjects of Chapter 2. I examine the

publication in relation to Percier and Fontaine's work as stage decorators during the revolution

and how the architects formulated a new visual theory of the interior through this book. In

Chapter 3, the country house of Malmaison serves as a departure point for exploring Percier and

Fontaine's attempts to conceive an architectural representation of Napoleon. At Malmaison,

which marked the beginning of Percier and Fontaine's relationship with Napoleon, the architects

confronted the problem of how to architecturally represent the First Consul's rapid rise to power.

Their surprising adoption of the tent as a predominant motif of Malmaison indicates that in the

wake of the revolution, the monumental language of architecture in which Percier and Fontaine

had been trained as students was incapable of expressing the new spatial practices necessary for

a modern French empire. The thematic focus of the coda that ends the dissertation is the

platinum cabinet at Aranjuez, which I consider as the culmination of Percier and Fontaine's

interior aesthetic.

     In *Résidences de souverains* (1833), Percier and Fontaine's last co-authored book, they

wrote that nothing was so contingent upon the changing forces of history than architecture:

> it must be recognized with regret that at times dependent on
> caprice and inconstancy, at others subject to immoderate

> exigencies or needs, always subordinated to the influence of events and of time, architecture can only arrive at certain success with difficulty. Constantly charged with restrictions, it is much less free than all of the other arts...[23]

The interior was the last bastion, the *temenos* of architecture, where it could exert control over sculpture, painting and the decorative arts in order to construct a total work of art that was not subject to the disciplinary pressures of engineering, nor to the "influence of events and time." Yet as the final pages of the *Recueil* show, the forces of history were already at play in the interior, transforming decorations that were intended as eternal symbols into the artifacts of a past age.

This dissertation does not offer a monograph on Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations. Nor do I seek to read their designs in an attempt to recuperate an original configuration of the interior as it was actually built.[24] Integrating histories of architecture, culture and the decorative arts, my study explores decoration and the interior, two key, inter-related areas of Percier and Fontaine's practice, through different thematic lenses and in different cultural contexts. By adopting a synchronic approach, I aim to underscore the architects' points of contact with or areas of resistance to broader political and social forces operating in this relatively short period, and to explore issues that might otherwise be missed in a study with a more extensive timeline. Ultimately, I seek to emphasize that Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations, far from being a marginal topic of study, shows the glimmerings of modern architecture confronting the philosophical problem of how to capture interiority. Percier and

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[23] Percier and Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains,* 74.

[24] This archaeological approach has been admirably undertaken by Jean-Pierre Samoyault and other decorative arts historians. See Jean-Pierre Samoyault and Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Mobilier Du Général Moreau : Un Ameublement à La Mode En 1802 : Musée National Du Château De Fontainebleau, 16 Juin-14 Septembre 1992* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992).

Fontaine's interiors, particularly in their recourse to the tent, shed the heavy, tectonic weight of

monuments, presaging instead an architecture of mobility and lightness.

Chapter 1
Architecture and the Fraternal Arts

The education of the architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and the formation of their friendship and professional partnership in late eighteenth-century France is the primary focus of this chapter. Their shared biographical background is critical to understanding how Percier and Fontaine were trained in and ultimately abandoned an eighteenth-century neoclassical aesthetic and turned towards an architecture focused on interior decoration. As students of the Académie royale d'architecture and as young professionals during the revolution, they engaged with new conceptions of politics, culture and history. Partially through luck, they were able to navigate the turbulent circumstances of the 1790s and forge successful careers at a time when few opportunities to build were available. They also owed their fortune to what I term a notion of the "fraternal arts," a collaborative form of artistic practice among peers developed during their stay at the Académie de France in Rome, which would have strong political connotations in the context of revolutionary Paris.

The artistic friendship that Percier and Fontaine forged between themselves — despite contrasting visions of architecture — emblematized a broader conception of collective artistic practice that depended upon intimate exchanges among architects, painters, sculptors and craftsmen. This chapter explores the making of Percier and Fontaine's partnership enterprise as conditioned by and contributing to a notion of the fraternal arts, which would become an essential element of their work in the interior. The architects' credo of friendship lasted throughout their lives and ended with Percier and Fontaine being buried together in a triple grave, shared with the silent member of their group, Claude-Louis Bernier. As we shall see,

neoclassical aesthetics, revolutionary ideals and the sweeping social changes of the post-Revolutionary period complicated and enriched the architects' friendship.

Percier and Fontaine's incorporation of new conceptions of history during the revolutionary period constitutes the other central focus of this chapter. As students in the academy, Percier and Fontaine were trained to emulate the models of ancient architecture praised by their professor Julien David Le Roy. However, during their work in the committees on public monuments formed during the revolution, the architects, Percier in particular, inadvertently turned to other potent sources of history. It was through his work with Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des monuments français that Percier discovered artifacts and ornaments of different periods, and subsequently the notion of history as an ordering principle of architecture.

Meeting first as students in 1779, Percier and Fontaine each ended up undertaking a transformative journey to Académie de France in Rome, which was the crowning achievement for young French architects in the late eighteenth century. With Fontaine returning to Paris in 1789 and Percier in 1791, they began their professional partnership as stage decorators during the French Revolution and gained fame as architects during Napoleon's rule. Together, they built the arc of the Carrousel, designed the famed Rivoli arcade, and decorated countless interiors and residences, all the while co-authoring publications that would have a decisive influence on a subsequent generation of European architects.[25] Young competitors had often collaborated on large-scale public projects. Yet few partnerships made such a lasting impression on the architectural community of early nineteenth-century France as that of Percier and Fontaine.

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[25] This generation included Jacques Ignace Hittorff, Hippolyte Lebas, Visconti and many others. Many of these architects studied directly under Percier and Fontaine. See for example, Barry Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer: Historicism in the Age of Industry* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1994) and David Van Zanten, *Designing Paris : the Architecture of Duban, Labrouste, Duc, and Vaudoyer* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987).

The formation of Percier and Fontaine's practice and their turn to interior decoration must be read as an attempt to renegotiate the boundaries of the architectural discipline. Historians position Durand as the definitive figure marking architecture's departure from the Vitruvian tradition and its turn towards a modern theoretical discourse of structure, rationality and the plan as program.[26] Durand's role as architecture professor at the École polytechnique, the engineering school founded in 1795, forms a necessary plot twist in the crisis of architectural autonomy.[27] Durand's method was formed in the prescient awareness that the architectural knowledge produced in the royal academy was ceding ground to the specialized training of students educated in engineering. However, rather than distinguishing a special kind of architectural knowledge from other forms of rationality, Percier and Fontaine emphasized architecture's links with the other arts. At the same time, they believed that architecture played a guiding role in the development of what they called the "industrial arts," an area that comprised the production of furniture and luxury objects. This practical element allowed their partnership to survive, and indeed, even flourish. As demonstrated by the work of Jean-Philippe Garric, Percier and Fontaine's extensive careers are evidence of the extent to which their vision of architecture addressed the social and cultural needs of a succession of French political regimes.[28]

Their partnership did not actively last until the end of the Napoleonic empire, with Percier choosing to focus on teaching at his private school and Fontaine deciding to undertake ambitious yet ultimately abandoned projects for palaces, country houses and administrative

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[26] Werner Szambien, *Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, 1760-1834 : De L'imitation à la Norme* (Paris: Picard, 1984). See also Alberto Pérez Gómez. *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

[27] Antoine Picon. *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Picon, "Introduction," in Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis of the Lectures on Architecture with Graphic Portion of the Lectures on Architecture* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2000).

[28] Jean-Philippe Garric. *Percier et Fontaine: Les architectes de Napoléon* (Paris: Bélin, 2012).

buildings scattered across Napoleon's imperial territories. (Although, it should be noted that both continued to hope for, and work towards, the completion of their designs for the Palais du roi de Rome.) However, Garric argues that during the crucial years of their collaboration, Percier and Fontaine produced a range of work that would have been impossible for a single architect in post-Revolutionary France to undertake by himself. Furthermore, the unique combination of their talents — Fontaine's administrative and entrepreneurial skills and Percier's abilities in design and draftsmanship — enabled them to expand the range of their practice, from large-scale building projects to delicate objects for the table. Importantly, Percier and Fontaine undertook all of these activities as architectural practices befitting the profession.

Specifically for the architectural discipline, Percier and Fontaine's partnership shows that during a moment commonly construed as the beginnings of its autonomy, architecture in fact was at its most porous and fragile. Emil Kaufmann first established the view of the eighteenth century as a critical turning point in architectural theory. In *Three Revolutionary Architects,*[29] Kaufmann linked the bold geometric forms and freestanding structures envisioned by Étienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and Jean-Jacques Lequeu with the emergence of an architectural autonomy that sought to define its own rules and principles, free from of any outside constraints. Kaufmann's reading, which traces the architectural heritage of the Modernist movement to an earlier eighteenth century avant-garde, has been criticized, but nonetheless remains influential.[30] Percier and Fontaine's working relationship challenges Kaufmann's notion of the Enlightenment architect as the singular creative genius. Architects of the time did imagine themselves as megalomaniacal geniuses, shaping nature and the world into

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[29] Emil Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952).

[30] See Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (The MIT Press, 2008).

a singular artistic vision, as indicated in the writings of Ledoux.[31] However, there were simultaneously other architects who espoused a counter-vision of architecture as a collective set of practices, in dialogue with other forms of art. This was particularly true for the architects who began their professional careers during the French Revolution. Percier and Fontaine were a generation younger than Ledoux, at a time when architecture was often learned and practiced as a collaborative endeavor. It was by working in teams — among the most famous Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand and Jean-Thomas Thibault and Jacques Molinos and Jacques-Guillaume Legrand — that architects could create projects that answered the critical, aesthetic and practical demands of the discipline, particularly within the politically tense period of the French Revolution. That both Percier and Fontaine managed to survive the Terror, Napoleon's rise and fall, the invasion of Paris by Allied troops in 1815, the Bourbon Restoration, the July Monarchy, and in the case of Fontaine, the 1848 Revolution and the beginning of Napoleon III's reign, all the while continuing to produce architectural work is significant in itself. As will be explored further, the unexpected fame and reputation they gained as interior decorators is what ultimately made their survival possible.

An examination of the early formation of Percier and Fontaine's partnership demonstrates that architecture required a heteroclite accumulation of different practices, from engraving and interior decoration to the administrative and entrepreneurial tasks involved in the overseeing of building projects. In the case of Percier and Fontaine, each developed distinct design methods within the competitive environment of the architectural academy. Both Percier and Fontaine's envisioning of architecture was conditioned by the academic milieu of the fine arts. However, Percier, on the one hand, cultivated an aesthetic vision that entailed the creation

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[31] See Picon, *French Architects and Engineers*, especially Chapter 10, "From the Revolutionary 'Genius' to Neo-Classicism," 256-334.

of meticulous drawings that stood on their own right with a careful attention to decorative elements. On the other hand, Fontaine, whose tutelage under his father included learning the family building trade on the ground, gravitated toward projects that incorporated the utilitarian side of architecture. Yet as we shall see, Fontaine also had a penchant for painting dramatic architectural *mis-en-scène,* which veered into the realm of fantasy. It was in fact Percier who had the more rational approach to projects, whether it was designing a clock for a mantelpiece or orchestrating a public ceremony. Both of their visions were necessary in the subsequent transformation of the interior into a primary site for architectural theory.

While Percier and Fontaine studied the ancient monuments of Rome, they also turned to domestic buildings from the Renaissance and Baroque periods that had been neglected by their fellow students at the academy in Rome. In another departure from the study of antiquity lauded by their professors at the royal academy, Percier and Fontaine inadvertently learned of other historical periods during their participation in the revolutionary committees established to destroy and demolish the monuments of the monarchy. Despite the subsequent mythologization of Percier as the socially maladjusted artist locked away in his studio, the architect played an active role in the artistic committees and organizations of the Revolution. For his work with Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des monuments français, Percier channeled his burgeoning knowledge of Romanesque, Gothic and French Renaissance architecture into "period rooms" for the museum. Thus, Percier and Fontaine's work during the revolution must be seen as active participants in what Barry Bergdoll has called a much longer tradition of "the culture of historicism," which culminated in a "philosophy of an architecture contingent on its place in the progress and dynamics of historical change."[32] The interior, as I will argue in the following

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[32] Barry Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer : Historicism in the Age of Industry* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1994), 3.

chapter, provided the conceptual space in which to work out the range of historical forms they encountered and organize them into an expressive compositional framework.

It was not until the two architects traveled to Rome as students of the French academy that they developed their friendship from a mere acquaintance into an active working collaboration. In Italy, Percier and Fontaine, alongside other laureates of the coveted prix de Rome awarded by the academy to promising students, developed the classically inflected vocabulary that would serve as the basis of their later professional work during the revolution and for Napoleon.

Percier and Fontaine's period in Rome is particularly important in understanding the formation of their partnership, for it marks the inception of the working structure that would define their subsequent careers. The neoclassical aesthetic that they developed in Rome depended upon a disciplinary disintegration. The aesthetic ideas that circulated among this expatriate community of student architects, sculptors and painters not only marked a turn towards a neoclassical sensibility in terms of the antique models that they studied, copied and reconstructed as part of their assignments for the academy in Paris.[33] A unique vision of friendship among equals consummated in the work of art developed as an ideal form of artistic production before the events of the French revolution. This collective and collaborative approach to art culminated in an unlikely monument that was dedicated not to a genius or a noble patron, but to a fellow student. The final part of the chapter treats the initiation of Percier and Fontaine's professional careers in the context of revolutionary Paris, as their friendship developed into an active partnership.

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[33] See, for example, Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance* of the French Revolution (Berkeley: University of California,1988).

A Pact of Friendship

Central to my discussion of Percier and Fontaine's work — and their vision of the interior — is the concept of friendship. The definitive role that their friendship played is patent in the fact that the architects, along with Claude Louis Bernier, the third, silent part of their group, were all buried together in the same grave at Père Lachaise, despite their attachment to other students, colleagues, wives and children. Designed by Fontaine after the death of Bernier in 1830, the first of the three to die, the tombstone of the triple grave was engraved with the words, HI TRES IN UNUM, a Latin phrase (which elides the verb sunt) meaning "these three are one," from the Epistle of St. John which, as Garric notes, hardly carries Christian connotations when applied to the triple male grave of the three architects, one of the few instances of such a funerary monument in history.[34] [Figure 1.1] Fontaine had incorporated this phrase earlier as part of the decorative program of the Chapelle Expiatoire, a very different monument designed in 1815 to commemorate Marie-Antoinette, Louis XVI and the Swiss Guard. [Figure 1.2] According to legend, the three architects had agreed to remain lifelong friends and never to break the bonds of their friendship by marrying. The fact that both Bernier and Fontaine took pains to hide their relationships with women from Percier suggests that it was Percier who most steadfastly adhered to their "pact of friendship." It also indicates an awareness of the separation

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[34] It seems that Fontaine had originally designed the tombstone with the expression *Ex Utile Decus* (out of usefulness comes virtue) to be carved on each of the panels of the octagonal monument. Interestingly, decus is also the Latin word for ornament. See Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Journal (1799-1853)* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1987) II, 834. The decision to incorporate the expression, "Here three in one," used to describe the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, would emphasize the triadic nature of their partnership, rather than the usefulness of their profession of architecture.

between their private lives and their professional work as architects, and a desire to foreground the latter.

In the case of Percier and Fontaine, friendship was a term that served to elevate the status of the architect to a humanist level, in emulation of ancient artists. A professionalized partnership like theirs offered the protection that no longer came from the royal administration or the apprenticeships offered by older practicing architects protected by noble patrons. In this sense, the narrative of friendship that dominated eulogies of the two architects continued a humanist tradition of thinking of the notion of friendship as an open, dialogic process that, for example, helped foster the unique painting practice of Nicolas Poussin in the context of seventeenth-century Rome.[35] However, there is an explicitly instrumental aspect to Percier and Fontaine's union that was necessitated by the realities of working in revolutionary Paris. As Garric has noted, it shows the power that Percier's republican sympathies wielded within the partnership, which constituted one of the first architectural firms to have two equal members at the top.[36] The political associations of friendship that developed during the revolutionary period conditioned Percier and Fontaine's relationship. Revolutionary orators like Louis-Léon-Antoine Saint-Just sought to make friendship a defining political principle in founding the new French republic. In his posthumously published thoughts on the founding of republican institutions, Saint-Just proclaimed, "All men of twenty-one years must declare who his friends are in the temple. This declaration must be renewed, every year, during the month of Ventôse.... Those who have remained united all of their lives are enclosed within the same tomb.... Those who say

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[35] For paintings and friendship, see Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[36] Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 71. "Si l'on se rappelle aussi que c'est à Charles Percier qu'on demandera de dessiner en 1796 les premiers billets de cinq cents et de mille francs, on obtient plutôt le portrait d'un artiste officiel que celui d'un architecte prudemment resté en retrait. D'autant qu'à ces différentes fonctions liées au pouvoir s'ajoutent des commandes architecturales politiquement très en vue..."

they do not believe in friendship, or who do not have any friends, are banished."[37] In making

such a declaration, Saint-Just hoped to eradicate the enemies of the new French republic by

instilling a sense of public friendship among all citizens.

Although it is easy to cast Percier and Fontaine's friendship under the aegis of the

republican ideals demanded as the very condition of citizenship, the story becomes more

complicated when one asks how the politics of friendship affects the artistic decisions of the

architects. My use of "politics" in describing Percier and Fontaine's friendship is intentional. It

is intended to conjure the constant need to reaffirm a system of hierarchy and rank within a

partnership that developed out of the egalitarian ideals of the revolution. This is suggested above

all in the architects' decision to publish Percier's name first, rather than alphabetically, in all of

their joint publications, and the intentional erasure of minor collaborators on their publishing

projects. This chapter reveals that despite being subsequently depicted by Fontaine as a perfect

union, Percier and Fontaine's relationship was forged from struggles and differences, with

Fontaine often being the one benefiting from Percier's talents and artistic connections. Percier

and Fontaine's friendship as representative of a vision of artistic practice must be tempered in

part by the role played by Fontaine as the hagiographer of his relationship with Percier.

Friendship became a powerful metaphor that allowed Fontaine to survive a succession of regime

changes as well as stylistic revolutions. Their union must be analyzed both as a part of late

eighteenth-century artistic practice and as a heavily edited autobiographical text written by

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[37] Louis-Antoine-Léon Saint-Just, *Fragmens sur les institutions républicaines : ouvrage posthume de Saint-Just* (Paris: Techener, 1831), 59-60. On Saint-Just's concept of friendship in the founding of revolutionary institutions, see Rolland, Patrick. "La signification politique de l'amitié chez Saint-Just," *Annales Historiques De La Révolution Française* July-September (1984): 255-8.

Fontaine in the mid nineteenth-century, a historical narrative from which Percier's images cannot be extricated.

Just ten months before his death, Fontaine turned to his earliest memories as a student of architecture. The 90-year old had ceased keeping daily records of his official activities in his journal, which had recorded the events in his life for over 50 years. Instead, his entries became more reflective, blending commentary on the tumultuous political events that had recently brought Napoleon III to power with reminiscences of his early days as an architecture student. On January 30, 1853, Fontaine recalled in particular the first pact of friendship he had made with Percier. In 1779, they met in the studio of the architect and academician, Antoine-François Peyre (1739-1823). Their first encounter could have been the start of a bitter rivalry. Instead, Fontaine writes that upon seeing Percier, he immediately decided to forge an alliance.

> Monsieur Peyre's school was crowded. I did not delay in recognizing, among so many students of different countries and ages, he who Providence had made in order to share in the fortune and luck of the long life that was given us to go through together. I immediately made with him the first sincere pact of friendship that endured for more than fifty years, and which only his death, too premature, could bring to an end.[38]

In his text, Fontaine conjures a sense of destiny in this early encounter. There is the recognition of a superior artist, a better half. As Fontaine wrote, "I viewed him much less as my rival than as my master, for I recognized in him a superiority of talents more extensive and more admired than mine were."[39] It might mark what Aristotle termed a "first friendship," first in chronology but also in terms of rank, the exemplary union that defines all others.

However, it must be remembered that this perception of Percier as the friend who would define all others was a retrospective act on the part of Fontaine. In fact, after this first encounter

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[38] Fontaine, *Journal*, II, 1303.

[39] Fontaine, *Journal,* II, 1304.

they did not actively begin collaborating and working together until their studies in Rome several

year afterwards. In *Mia Vita*, an autobiographical text that Fontaine penned for his grandchildren

in 1839[40] after the death of Percier, Fontaine described his attempt to acquire friends as a

necessary strategy for survival. Not all of the students at the school were studying to become

serious architects. According to Fontaine, it was easy to succumb to the pleasures of Paris.

Upon his arrival at Peyre's school, he described an unsavory mixture of students from different

backgrounds: "out of the twenty or thirty students, many had come from their provinces simply

to spend the money of their parents."[41]

The talent and work ethic of Percier would have naturally stood out in Peyre's school. At

an early age, Percier's aptitude for drawing enabled him to move beyond his social station as the

son of a gatekeeper and laundrywoman, a humble background that would nonetheless prove

useful during the revolution. He was only 15 years old when he entered Peyre le jeune's private

architecture school. Yet the other students already recognized his talents as a skilled draftsman.

Despite his modest background, Percier had received private drawing lessons as a child from the

painter Jean-Jacques Lagrenée, or Lagrenée le jeune, who had traveled to Rome and was

interested in the study of antiquity. Percier entered the École Royale Gratuite de Dessin

sometime around 1773 and studied there for seven years.[42] Jean-Jacques Bachelier established

the free drawing school in 1766 for artisans and craftsmen [Figure 1.3]. Percier was immersed in

an experimental environment which produced a unique curriculum that combined the teachings

of the fine arts academies with the commercial interests of the *marchand merciers*, or luxury

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[40] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers, 8.*

[41] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 4.

[42] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers,* 16.

goods merchants.[43] At a young age, Percier gained exposure to different drawing techniques, from the models used by artisans training in the decorative arts to geometric designs utilized by students aiming to enter the architecture academy. The goal was not only to provide formal education to artisans and craftsmen but also to teach young students like Percier how to communicate their thoughts through drawing. The theoretician Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy described Bachelier's aims: "The principle objective of his institution is to bring the study of ornament within the reach of young people who have decided upon the exercise of those practicing the mechanical arts, to which this knowledge is indispensable. It also claims to give the elements of drawing to many artists who may need these lessons, in order to trace or communicate their thoughts."[44]

Instead of a humanist education of learning to read ancient texts and languages, Percier's early education consisted of training his hand to read the figures and shapes before him and express them on paper. As a student, Percier would have developed his drawing techniques by copying drawings and engravings of still lifes, animals and fragments of architectural ornaments.[45] The grammatical and punctuation mistakes that litter the few letters he penned to students and friends contrast starkly with the eloquence of line found in his drawings.

The reputation that Percier subsequently enjoyed at the academy of architecture suggests that he developed at an early age a distinctive attitude to drawing that was not shared by

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[43] On the École gratuite de dessin, see Ulrich Leben, *Object Design in the Age of Enlightenment: The History of the Royal Free Drawing School in Paris* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004). For the *marchands merciers* and their role in shaping eighteenth-century aesthetics, see Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets: The Marchands Merciers of Eighteenth-century Paris* (Malibu, Calif: Victoria and Albert Museum in association with the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996).

[44] Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, *Rapport sur les arts* (Paris, 1797), 94, quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers,* 14.

[45] Although the school received a royal privilege from Louis XVI, its existence as an educational institution in the arts was precarious because of the constant competition with the royal academies of sculpture, drawing and architecture. For instance, the royal academy of painting jealously guarded the right to draw the nude, or *académie*, from live models.

Fontaine. Percier's friend and fellow architect Antoine-Thomas-Laurent Vaudoyer later wrote that Percier hardly left any writings after his death, instead leaving behind a large body of drawings made throughout his life.[46] For Percier, the drawing itself could be considered a finished product, an end to itself. Even his sketches have a meticulous quality to them, even if they are the preliminary design for a product such as a chair or soup tureen.

However, Percier's training within the curriculum of the free drawing school also meant that his renderings always served a practical purpose; it is rare if not impossible to find any kind of fantasy or capriccio among his images. Percier maintained a lifelong interest in the drawing school, intervening in its coursework, organizing competitions and class structure and even lending students engravings of ornaments to copy.[47] Dissuaded by Fontaine from giving money to the École des Beaux-Arts near the end of his life, Percier instead donated 4,000 francs to the school. Although the school administration had intended to disburse the sum to students through an annual competition for a "Prix Percier," the plans for the award never came to fruition.[48]

In more ways than one, the particular form of knowledge and visual training disseminated by the École gratuite de dessin would have a direct bearing on the graphic style Percier helped to produce around 1800, a subject which will be discussed in Chapter 2. Percier's drawing style could be described as being egalitarian, for while his confident renderings might afford aesthetic pleasure to collectors and connoisseurs, his simple drawing technique also made his designs extremely legible to the artisans who were to transform them into finished products. His early ability to communicate through drawing rather than writing and the large corpus of images he

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[46] Antoine-Thomas-Laurent-Vaudoyer, "Nécrologie de Charles Percier," Bibliothèque de l'École national supérieure des beaux-arts, Ms 249, 78. "Cependant, c'est artiste écrivait peu, mais il parlait si bien que la conversation était toujours savante, intéressante et entrainante."

[47] Archives Nationales F/21/644. M. Rouillard. Mr. Percier et l'école de dessin. "Projets et opinion de Mr. Percier concernant l'Ecole impériale de Dessin."

[48] Ibid.

carefully organized into bound albums and bequeathed to students after his death distinguished

him from Fontaine.[49] The *pentimenti* and hastily sketched ideas by Percier found scattered in

scrapbooks and albums by his students are often marked with "by Percier," or "the idea of M.

Percier," suggesting that his corrective hand held a cult status among students who emulated his

drawing abilities.[50] [Figure 1.4]

For Percier, the ability to render objects in a precise manner constituted a form of

knowledge that could not always be evoked textually. As he indicated to numerous students of

his private atelier, which he established while he was still a student, drawing was also the

primary vehicle of communication, whether creating a design for an artisan to execute, or

drafting a presentation drawing for a client.[51] Later students read Percier's precise rendering

technique as the encapsulation of an entire mode of architectural reasoning and upheld it as a

model to be emulated. His drawing method would eventually be challenged by a subsequent

generation of "romantic" architects.[52]

Fontaine, trained in the practical skills of bookkeeping and site management, never

maintained the same reverence for drawing as Percier.[53] Fontaine was born the eldest of seven

children in Pontoise, roughly 20 miles from the center of Paris, to a line of architects. His

grandfather was an architect who specialized in fountains and garden designs; one generation

later, his father worked as a building entrepreneur and hydraulics specialist for the Prince de

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[49] Blair Davis Hixson, "The Roman Drawings of Charles Percier" (PhD diss., University of Santa Barbara, 2009).

[50] See, for example, the Auguste Quintinet Album, or the Metropolitan Museum scrapbook.

[51] Charles Percier to Hippolyte Lebas.

[52] Barry Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer*, 76-77.

[53] See Albert Soubies, *Les membres de l'Académie des beaux-arts depuis la fondation d'Institut* (Paris : E. Flammarion, 1904-1910), 182.

Conti.[54] It was a trade that his father hoped he would adopt. After finishing his schooling at the age of 14, his father took him to l'Ile d'Adam, 10 miles from Pontoise, where he was working on a hydraulics project for the gardens of the prince of Conti with the architect Jean-Baptiste André. During his work at l'Isle d'Adam, Fontaine met the young architect Jean-Thomas Thibault, who worked as a draftsman in the studios of several Parisian architects, among them Étienne-Louis Boullée.[55]

By his own account, Fontaine knew that he did not wish to remain a provincial architect scraping by to provide for the family. Fontaine described this first work at l'Isle d'Adam as the moment he realized his lack of interest in the manual work involved on the building site. He received a hands-on education "working daily with my hands, undertaking the tasks and accounts of laborers."[56] However, this account of his early life as a manual laborer seems slightly exaggerated, given that his father would later visit the baron de Breteuil, Louis XVI's Household minister, on his son's behalf to help him obtain a royal pension in Rome. This early education under his father's apprenticeship would serve him well in his subsequent work for Napoleon, for Fontaine would later be in charge of overseeing a vast array of building projects throughout the French empire, which required a familiarity with administrative paperwork, overseeing construction sites and keeping track of expenses.

From the Training Studio to the Academy

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[54] Jeanne Du Portal, *Charles Percier (1764-1838) Reproductions de dessins conservés à la Bibliotheque de l'institut* (Paris: M. Rousseau, 1931), 10.

[55] Fontaine, "Notice sur la vie de Thibault," in *Journal*, Vol. II, 743.

[56] Fontaine, "Mia vita," quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Percier,* 69.

Entry into Peyre le jeune's studio constituted a turning point in each of the architects' lives. While Percier had already received formal training in drawing, it was through Peyre le jeune that he was able to systematically study antiquity as a primary source of his design ideas.[57] For Fontaine, entering the private studio meant gaining a formal education in architectural draftsmanship, rather than the worksite apprenticeship he had under his father. Fontaine had already initiated specialized training in architecture in the school of the architect Pierre Panseron. However, it was through Peyre that Fontaine could ultimately secure the connections necessary to entering the academy.[58] For both Percier and Fontaine, Peyre le jeune's studio meant getting one step closer to entry into the royal academy of architecture, and one step closer to the source of architectural knowledge, ideals and fantasy: Rome.

Private ateliers such as Peyre le jeune's played a pivotal role in training generations of young architects in the technical and theoretical knowledge necessary for entering the royal academy. Among the most famous of such private ateliers was the École des arts run by Jacques-François Blondel. At his school, Blondel devised a rigorous schedule that included training in algebra, mathematics, courses in landscape drawing, as well as figurative and perspectival exercises, and lessons in architectural history. He eventually introduced this comprehensive curriculum to the academy when he became *professeur d'architecture* in 1762.[59] Among the most innovative aspects of Blondel's school were the weekly fieldtrips he organized

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[57] Raoul Rochette, "Charles Percier, architecte," in *Revue des deux mondes* 24 (1840): 250.

[58] Panseron never became a member of the academy, despite repeated attempts. As Garric has noted, there were many similarities in Percier and Fontaine's *recueils* and the practical-minded Panseron, whose book, *Éléments d'architecture* (1773-6) was used as a manual for his students. Furthermore, under Panseron's tutelage, young architects with an entrepreneurial background were able to develop skills that would not have been possible on the worksite. Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 15.

[59] Perouse de Montclos, *Les prix de Rome : Concours de l'académie royale d'architecture au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris : Berger-Levrault ; Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts 1984), 8.

to sites around Paris, from François Blondel's Porte Saint-Denis to François Mansart's church of Val-de-Grâce, monuments of the Grand Siècle that were also testaments to royal authority.[60]

In contrast to Blondel's role as theoretician and pedagogue, Peyre le jeune was a working architect who actively participated in the public building projects initiated under Louis XVI's reign, from the expansion plans for Versailles to the reconstruction project for the Bibliothèque du Roi.[61] Peyre le jeune had trained under his older brother, Marie-Joseph Peyre, and traveled to Rome as *pensionnaire* of the Académie de France in 1763. He had won the architecture academy's grand prix competition with a design for an open market.[62] Upon his return to France, he established a private atelier while simultaneously serving in the royal building administration, or Conseil des bâtiments du roi, as supervisor of works at the church of Saint Germain-en-Laye. Architects were not short of work during this period, and Peyre's active schedule meant that he had little time to spend on teaching the young students in his school. Fontaine recalled that instead of structured lessons such as those featured at Blondel's school, Peyre was rarely present. Instead, students were expected to find their own employment on current projects then underway, helping to draft plans for the reconstruction of the Palais Royal and its theater, provide assistance in the renovation work at Versailles and to help envision the hospitals, churches and other public buildings then being designed.[63] It was only by entering into the academy, however, that a student would be able to establish his own reputation.

In order to gain more recognition, students vied for the limited number of spots available in the royal academy where they would contend in the annual competition for the prix de Rome.

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[60] Freek H. Schmidt, "Expose Ignorance and Revive the 'Bon Goût:' Foreign Architects at Jacques-François Blondel's École des Arts," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 61 (Mar. 2002): 8.

[61] Adolphe Lance, *Dictionnaire des architectes français* vol. 2 (Paris : A. Morel, 1872), 204.

[62] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 18. For Peyre's grand prix design of 1762, see Montclos, *Les prix de Rome*, 74-5.

[63] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 5.

Through a chance opening, Fontaine was able to enter the academy in 1784 as the student of the

academician Jean-François Heurtier, three years after Percier had become the student of Julien-

David Le Roy.[64] Percier and Fontaine would have been exposed to the radical new ideas

circulating within the Académie royale d'architecture during the 1780s: an archaeological,

scholarly impulse from the teachings of Le Roy, the tendency to treat architecture as a fine art

and thus a careful attention to its two-dimensional representation found in the works of Étienne-

Louis Boullée, and the technical, rational approach represented by academy members such as the

engineer Jean-Rodolphe Perronet. Influenced by sensationalist theories, both Le Roy's

archeological studies and Boullée's conceptual notion of architecture emphasized the picturesque

and experiential qualities over construction and technical aspects. In other words, these ideas

conceptualized architecture as representation rather than as practical, tectonic construction. The

professors at the academy equally influenced Fontaine and Percier. However, Fontaine did not

manage to achieve the same level of success as Percier, taking the sensationalist impulses

running in the academy to an unwelcome extreme, as evidenced by his 1785 grand prix entry for

a burial ground for the great men of the nation. At the academy, the two architects took

divergent paths that would only intersect again in Rome.

When Le Roy was appointed to replace Blondel as professor of architecture, a decisively

international influence entered the academy. Instead of the local French monuments that Blondel

had trained his students to admire and emulate, Le Roy's weekly lessons on architecture looked

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[64] Fontaine was allowed to become the student of Heurtier only because a previous student, Paru, had died in a drowning accident. As Fontaine recalls, Peyre le jeune had sent a letter to his friend Heurtier, asking if Fontaine could take the place of another student. Fontaine, *Journal* I, 626. According to Perouse de Montclos, the requirements for becoming a student of the academy were strict: one had to be at least sixteen, have good morals and be catholic, know how to read and write, have a general understanding of arithmetic, know how to draw, and foremost, be sponsored by a member of the academy. Each member, with the exception of the professor of architecture, could only take on one student. The sponsorship often took familial lines, as architectural fathers sponsored their sons, allowing them to participate in the most important event for students: the grand prix competition. Montclos, *Les prix de Rome*, 9.

to ancient Greece, Egypt and China in his antiquarian search for the origins of good architectural

principles. Perouse de Montclos writes that up until the death of Blondel, the academy's official

motto was "the national discourse" of a specifically French style that canonized the architecture

of the Grand Siècle of Louis XIV.[65] Under the long tenure of Blondel as professor of the

academy, the theoretical aspects of the architectural orders were counterbalanced by an emphasis

on the practical necessities of good construction and maintaining the decorum demanded by the

patron of the building.[66] His death in 1774— the same year as Louis XV—brought a new

generation of architects to the fore. Despite the changes within the institution, Louis XVI's

appointment of Charles Claude Flahaut de La Billarderie, or the Comte d'Angiviller, as the

Directeur général des Bâtiments du roi in 1774, meant that the royal administration would exert

ideological control over the academies.

Le Roy's publications introduced new ideas of antiquity and the history of architecture.

As two students put it, Le Roy's nomination as professor of the academy was couched as "a

battle long ago established in the school between modern architecture and the architecture of

antiquity," (modern architecture meaning the kind advocated by Blondel) and that "the school of

the Peyres, of the David Leroys, of the Clérisseaus, the imitators of the ancients, has gotten the

better of Blondel's."[67] Le Roy's books brought a sense of adventure to architecture's origins,

which made them accessible to wider readership. His writings in particular brought a more

rational and scientific reading of antiquity to the academy. Traveling to Rome in 1751 as a

pensionnaire of the academy, Le Roy later made a trip to Athens in order to measure and study

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[65] Montclos, *Les prix de Rome*, 17-20.

[66] See Werner Szambien, *Symmétrie, goût, caractère. Théorie et terminologie de l'architecture à l'âge classique, 1550-1800* (Paris: Picard, 1986) for a discussion of the changing usage of the term decorum in French architectural discourse.

[67] Jacques Guillaume Legrand and Charles Paul Landon, *Description de Paris, 1806-1809*, (1818), vol. I, 133, quoted in Pérouse de Montclos, *Les prix de Rome*, 8.

ancient Greek monuments, conducting research that would constitute the cornerstone of his

publication, *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* in 1758. [Figure 1.5] Le Roy's

lavishly illustrated book published the first scientific findings on Greek architecture, beating the

English team of Stuart and Revett by a number of years, and argued for the importance of early

archaic Greek architecture.[68] His work spurred the famed Greco-Roman debate with Giovanni

Batista Piranesi, who argued that Roman architecture represented a better model for architects to

imitate. According to Drew Armstrong, Leroy's rational approach to the study of antiquity

represented a new development in approaches to history, "in which the credibility of textual

authorities was assessed against the testimony of material remains," a method that Armstrong

contrasts with Piranesi's interpretation of architecture's origins.[69] Le Roy's publications sought

to base architectural knowledge in empirical-based studies of existing monuments, a precursor to

archaeological practices. Like the German thinker Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who held

Greek art as a paragon of achievement, Le Roy's writings focused on a selective, evaluative

history of monuments designated as architecture's ideal types. This is illustrated in his later

work, *Histoire de la disposition et des formes différentes que les Chrétiens ont données à leurs*

temples (1764). The publication comprised of a short history of sacred architecture that

culminated in Jacques-Germain Soufflot's designs for the church of Sainte Geneviève in Paris

and Pierre Contant d'Ivry's plan for the church of Sainte Madeleine. Le Roy's text was

accompanied by a morphology of plans showing early Christian temples and Renaissance

basilicas, finally achieving a harmonious whole in the Greek cross plan adopted at St.

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[68] As Robin Middleton points out, several of Le Roy's conjectures on ancient buildings and their measurements proved incorrect. Robin Middleton, *Julien-David Leroy : In Search of Architecture*. (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 2003).

[69] Christopher Drew Armstrong. *Julien-David Leroy and the Making of Architectural History* (Abingdon, Oxon [England]: Routledge, 2011), 8.

Geneviève [Figure 1.6].[70] Le Roy's views on ancient architecture played a seminal role in the context of the academy. As we shall see, it was Le Roy's model of history that Percier and Fontaine ended up subverting by choosing to focus on ordinary, domestic buildings scattered throughout Italy, structures that had been considered too inconsequential to be included in the grand historical narratives of ideal types constructed by Le Roy.

Other professors sought to establish new pedagogical methods for studying antiquity. In particular, Marie-Joseph Peyre, the brother of Percier and Fontaine's teacher, penned lectures on ancient architecture that not only influenced Peyre le jeune, but the young students then at the academy. Delivered in the 1770s, Peyre l'aîné delineated a genealogy of architecture, with Roman architecture descending from Greek and Egyptian architecture. In turn, the work of Donato Bramante, Baldassare Peruzzi and Michelangelo emerged from Roman monuments. Their works were to be studied and imitated because such architects had greater access to an antiquity not yet ruined, and thus their works were an unmediated representation of antiquity. It was Palladio, in Peyre l'aîné's mind, who demonstrated the clearest knowledge of antique precedents.[71] The most important lesson to be learned from ancient architecture, according to Peyre l'aîne, was the sense of grandeur created by the large scale of the buildings.

A lesser acknowledged, but equally important influence on Percier and Fontaine's subsequent collective career was Pierre-Adrien Pâris, who, like Le Roy, brought an interest in archaeology to the academy. Percier's career closely mirrored Pâris, who was celebrated as a skilled draftsman and had a particular talent for decoration. Among his most celebrated projects

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[70] On Ste. Geneviève and the notion of a greco-gothic aesthetic in France, see Robin Middleton, "The Abbé De Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic Ideal: A Prelude to Romantic Classicism." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25, 3/4 (Jul. 1962): 278–320, and Robin Middleton, "The Abbe De Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic Ideal." Part II, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26, 1/2 (Jan. 1963): 90–123.

[71] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 19.

were the drawings he produced for the Abbé de Saint-Non's *Voyage pittoresque, ou Description des royaumes de Naples et Sicile* (1781-6) [Figure 1.7], which featured antique monuments from Pompeii and Herculaneum, an area of interest for the amateur archaeologist.[72] He also served as *dessinateur du roi* to Louis XVI and later became architect of the Menus-Plaisirs, when he constructed the salle des États-généraux. It was likely while working under Pâris as a student that Percier first honed his talent for draftsmanship and drawings skills in architectural renderings, particularly designs for festival arrangements and structures created for the Menus-Plaisirs. As Vaudoyer later wrote, "Monsieur Pâris, a generous artist, far from turning Percier away from his academic studies toward the private work that he had given him, encouraged and directed this worthy collaborator in school competitions."[73] It was ultimately through Pâris that Percier and Fontaine secured their position as architects of the Opéra during the revolution. The post had originally been given to *Pâris*. However, the architect maintained his ties to Louis XVI and after the king's arrest and execution, refused to work in an official capacity for the Revolutionary government. He chose to retire, moving to his family property near Besançon but remained an especially close mentor of Percier.

Another architect who emphasized skills in draftsmanship, but with a much more dramatic effect, was Étienne-Louis Boullée. According to Bernard Huet, Boullée effected nothing short of an "epistemological rupture" within the academy. For Boullée, architecture was no longer taught as an "art of building," but rather considered as an ideational process, where

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[72] See Pierre Pinon, *Pierre-Adrien Pâris, 1745-1819, Architecte, et Les Monuments Antiques de Rome et de la Campanie* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2007), vol. 378. See also Antoine Gruber, "L'Oeuvre de Pierre-Adrien Pâris a la Cour de France. 1779-1791." *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire et de l'Art Français* (1975): 213-227

[73] Antoine Leon Thomas Vaudoyer, "Nécrologie de M. Charles Percier, 1838. Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des beaux-arts, Ms 198, p 70.

"one must conceive in order to execute."[74] Although his celebrated treatise, *L'Essai sur l'art,*

was neither completed nor published in his lifetime, Boullée nonetheless expounded theories of

an architecture unmoored from the orders and shaped from idealized geometric forms found in

nature.[75] There was a psychological aspect to these forms as well, as Boullée replaced the social

notion of *caractère* with one that described the emotions or feelings that certain forms

embodied.[76] Universal, abstract emotions, rather than a specific patron's social rank, became

paramount in the composition of architectural forms. Fontaine subsequently remembered

Boullée's work as "bizarre imaginings" instead of a representation of the pedagogical norms of

the academy, calling the academician a man of "expansive genius, of an elevated but unbalanced

[déréglé] knowledge."[77] However, as we shall see, it was Boullée's unruly vision that Fontaine

sought to emulate in his own student period work.

The respective interests and methods of the professors were most manifest in the student

concours, or competitions held at the academy. Although the events began as pedagogical

exercises aimed at training students in developing a measured, standardized representational

language of architecture, the "prix de Rome" competitions gradually became influential in their

own right. As early as 1758, the academy began requesting that copies of students' competition

entries be made in order to review the progress that the academy had made since initiating the

competition system. In 1787, Armand Parfait Prieur began publishing winning students' designs

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[74] Bernard Huet, "Introduction," in Werner Szambien, *Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand 1760-1834: De l'imitation à la norme* (Paris: Picard, 1984), 9. "Boullée légitime pour la première fois l'autonomie disciplinaire de l'Architecture et instaure sans en prévoir toutes les implications futures, une coupure épistémologique fondamentale."

[75] Included in the Fontaine library purchased by the Art Institute of Chicago is Boullée's project for the royal library, which had a relatively small print run. It is unclear whether this belonged to Fontaine or his nephew. On Fontaine's library, see David Van Zanten, "Fontaine in the Burnham Library," Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies, 13 (1988):132-145.

[76] Hanno-Walter Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory: from Vitruvius to the Present* (London; New York: Zwemmer; Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 141-65.

[77] Fontaine, *Journal* II, 743.

from the monthly competitions and the annual grand prix.[78] [Figure 1.8] Students could consult

the published collection as a visual archive. It is likely that professors also drew from students'

ideas for their own private projects. The competitions demonstrate that the academy's pedagogy

was focused not only on teaching students how to translate the textual description of a project

into visual form, but also on how to execute the design according to a set of structural

requirements and within a set scale. However, behind the meritocratic face of the competition

was an entire system of hierarchies, rivalries and factions that made up the institutional milieu of

the academy.

Gaining entry into the academy earlier than Fontaine, Percier had steadily participated in

a series of the competitions, crafting drawings that achieved a balance between picturesque

elements and architectural sections, plans and elevations. As Vaudoyer's comments suggest,

Percier received help from Pâris, indicating just how seriously professors and students took the

competitions. In both the prix d'emulation of August 1782 for "the house of a prince within a

picturesque garden" and in the 1782 grand prix's calls for a menagerie, the exercise entailed

articulating a relationship between independent architectural structures and their landscaped

sites. In his August 1782 design for a prince's house, Percier places a Palladian pavilion upon a

broad, stepped platform, with four fountains at each corner demarcating the square platform

around the structure and separating it from the surrounding *jardin pittoresque*. [Figure 1.9] The

facade is comprised of a portico of six Corinthian columns and statues. A cornice with

prominent dentils visually connects the portico to the principal block of the house. In the plan,

the axial symmetry created by the four stairs leading into the house is counterbalanced by the

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[78] Amant-Parfait Prieur and Pierre-Louis Van Cléemputte. *Collection Des Prix Que La Ci-devant Academie D'architecture Proposoit Et Couronnoit Tous Les Ans* (Paris: Basan, 1791). See also Marie-Laure Crosnier-Leconte, "Dessins d'école, bibliothèques d'ateliers : une affaire de copies," in Jean-Philippe Garric, ed., *Bibliothèques d'atelier. Édition et enseignement de l'architecture, Paris 1785-1871* (Paris: INHA 2011), accessed October 21, 2011, http://inha.revues.org/3187.

surprisingly intimate internal scheme organized around the central salon. The careful

draftsmanship, attention to ornamental details and the obsessive, mosaic-like arrangement of part

to whole to the point where the structure dissolves into the decorative in his architectural plans

suggests the influence of his early training at the free drawing school. Even in these early

projects, David Van Zanten has argued that Percier began developing a way of thinking of the

architectural plan as a kind of pictorial composition rather than spatial layout. This design

paradigm became central to the pedagogy of the Ecole des Beaux-arts in the mid-nineteenth

century.[79]

Percier's projects adopt a human scale at odds with the gigantism prevalent in other

students' designs. His submissions to the concours suggest that the stark, geometric massing and

strict correspondence between exterior and interior schemes viewed as exemplary of the

visionary architecture of this period were not carried out by all the students of the academy.

There is a hesitation in Percier's design, not only suggested by the spectral pediment-like form or

triangular roof hovering over the bare wall of the attic story, but in the visual oscillation created

by the monumental facade of Corinthian columns and the arched doorways and windows hidden

behind the portico. The design is cautious, as if Percier harbors a fear of overstepping the rules

set forth in the exercise.

By contrast, Fontaine's enthusiastic acceptance of the more radical experiments in

architectural design circulating in the academy is evident in his first and only grand prix entry.

(Although he had submitted a design for the 1783 competition for the menagerie, his rather

"unfinished" sketches were not chosen.) Fontaine made a bold statement in his attempt to win

the royal scholarship to Rome. In 1785, the jury chose Fontaine to compete with a design for "a

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[79] David Van Zanten, "Architectural Composition at the École des Beaux-Arts from Charles Percier to Charles Garnier," in *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, Arthur Drexler, ed. (New York: MOMA, 1977), 129.

funeral monument for the sovereigns of a grand empire, within an enclosure within which one will place individual sepulchers for the great men of the nation."[80] Although the competition project started off as a simple "chapelle sépulchrale," it was later changed to a more ambitious project.[81] Among the members who chose the program for that year were Le Roy, Boullée, Peyre l'aîné and Pâris. Composed of members with a strong interest in antique monuments, it is likely that they had conceived the project as a type of antiquarian exercise aimed at re-imagining the famed tomb of Augustus.

The idea for a burial ground that would enshrine the sovereign amidst the "great men" of the nation was not new. As several historians have noted, such a program would have undoubtedly been influenced by the ongoing projects for a public cemetery in Paris, the problem of a Bourbon family chapel, and d'Angiviller's attempt at the creation of a gallery to house the "illustrious men" of France.[82] However, the academicians' increasing interest in the conceptual, sublime aspects of architecture and in particular, the participation of Le Roy, Boullée and Peyre l'aîné as judges, marked a distinct turn towards the designing of grand, gigantic monuments which required a re-articulation of the entire surrounding urban fabric. Whereas earlier designs for the cenotaph, as Richard Etlin has noted, combined Christian and humanist symbolism in the commemoration of death, later competition designs featured neoclassical interpretations that adopted a language of stark geometric form and mass.[83] The composition of the committee

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[80] Henri Lemonnier, Lemonnier, *Procès-verbaux De l'Académie Royale D'architecture, 1671-1793* (Paris: J. Schemit, 1911), vol. 9, 154.

[81] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 71.

[82] For a discussion of the problem of a royal sepulcher, see Erika Naginski, "The Pyramid, the Fragment and the Royal Necropolis," in *Sculpture and Enlightenment* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2009). On d'Angiviller's gallery of famous men, see Francis H. Dowley, "D'Angiviller's Grands Hommes and the Significant Moment," *The Art Bulletin* 39: 4 (Dec. 1957): 259–277 and more recently, Andrew McClellan, "D'Angiviller's 'Great Men' of France and the Politics of the Parlements," Art History 13 (Jun. 1990): 174-91.

[83] Richard Etlin, *The Architecture of Death: The Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 41-3.

members suggests that they were looking not only for novel designs for the project, but an awareness of classical antique precedents in funerary architecture.

In his design for the sepulchral monument, Fontaine utilized the sensationalist effects that Le Roy had described in his account of Greek architecture to evoke a sublime image of death. [Figure 1.10] A dark veil of ink wash covers Fontaine's enormous drawings today held at the École des beaux-arts in Paris. Within a conical structure, the sovereign's tomb is located in a central sunken space, a circular colonnaded gallery of squat, baseless Doric columns mediating the lower section from the vast open space created by the dome. Instead of a square plan of ambulatories open on one side featured in an earlier academy design for a sovereign sepulcher, Fontaine utilizes a circular scheme, drastically reducing his plan to a pattern of concentric circles. Each ring marks a passage deeper into the earth. The visitor would enter the outer enclosure at the ground level, take a passage of stairs to a lower circular gallery housing a series of tombs, and access the monument after crossing the sloping surface of a courtyard. The double colonnade of heavy Doric columns within the central conical structure could only be accessed by going through yet another series of dark underground passages, until finally, the tomb of the sovereign would emerge.

Whereas Percier's 1783 grand prix entry for a menagerie might have shown design innovations in its arrangement of the menagerie and accompanying amphitheater and stables, Fontaine's design imagines an entire social ritual of mourning revolving around his imagined structure. Evocative of the Tomb of Augustus in Rome, Fontaine's design suggests an erudite knowledge culled not only from previous projects but textual sources as well.[84] His design also had political connotations. By pushing the sovereign's tomb into the bowels of the earth,

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[84] I thank Gianfranco Adornato for the connection to the Tomb of Augustus. Anna Maria Riccomini, "Storia E Fortuna Del Mausoleo Di Augusto Tra Rinascimento E Settecento" (PhD. diss., Università di Pisa, Scuola Speciale per l'archeologia, 1995).

Fontaine overturns the language of elevation that constituted the privileged sign of royal funerary

monuments. Instead, he utilizes a massive conical shape to create a mound-like monument

reminiscent of ancient "holy mountains" used as royal burial grounds.[85] Moreover, the

representation of figures marks Fontaine's entry out from the other drawings. [Figure 1.11]

Fontaine explores the emotive, almost histrionic effects that the moment of a sovereign's death

might engender. In the principal facade elevation, staffage figures draped in togas gesture wildly

toward the sign of providence: a giant thunderbolt splitting dark clouds from sunlight. In the

cross section of the central monument, the storm featured in the general plan has already passed.

This depiction of time was not the only innovation of Fontaine's drawing. Upon closer

inspection, the small, demi-lune niches set into the central domed space contain the macabre

spectacle of cadavers, as if the sovereign bodies have been subsumed by the signifying presence

of the architectural monument itself.

It is easy to picture Fontaine attempting to elevate his standing from entrepreneur's son to

learned architect through this ambitiously envisioned project. In particular, Fontaine used the

competition as a chance to showcase his painterly abilities. Boullée's shadow looms over

Fontaine's work. [Figure 1.12] Boullée's theories of architecture, although published after his

death, must have been known among the students of the academy. Based in a sentimental vision

of nature, Boullée described an "architecture of shadows," with forms constructed from the

emotional qualities of the seasons. In seeking to capture the character of a funerary monument,

Boullée imagined the creation of an *architecture ensevelie*, or a "sunken architecture," achieving

the effect of ruins half buried underground:

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[85] In a conversation on September 21, 2010, Mark Jarzombek suggested to me Herod's tomb as an early model of the tumulus tomb built within the mountain structure itself.

> In reflecting upon all the means that I had at my disposal for
> rendering my subject, I began to see that low and sagging
> proportions (if I can describe them as such) were the only means
> that I could employ. After having told myself that the skeleton of
> architecture is an absolutely naked and bare wall, it appeared to me
> that to render the picture of a sunken architecture, I had to make it
> so that at the same time that my production was satisfying in its
> totality, the spectator also presumed that the earth had hidden a
> part of it.[86]

Boullée's project for a funerary monument [Figure 1.13] shows the intended effect of

burying his structure half in the ground. A stark pyramidal form with a facade of "naked and

bare" walls seems to erupt from the earth, with no base, pedestals or stairs separating it from its

harsh surroundings. The building's dramatic effects are heightened by the depiction of storm

clouds brewing shafts of darkness.

Boullée's theories and visual idioms can be gleaned from in Fontaine's usage of dramatic

chiaroscuro, suggesting psychological effects and temperamental moods as well as the sunken

tomb space and stark geometry of the truncated cone, which creates a sparse architectural

language of opposing solid form to open void, of presence and absence. Countering the view

that Boullée's work was widely emulated by academy students, Oskar Reutersvärd made the

provocative suggestion that Fontaine's truncated cone served instead as the inspiration for

Boullée's project for a *cénotaphe tronconique*, which Reutersvärd dated to the 1790s.[87] And if

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[86] Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Architecture, Essai Sur L'art*, Pérouse de Montclos, ed. (Paris: Hermann, 1968), 133. On Boullée's vision of architecture and its relation to a psychoanalytical notion of the uncanny, see Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994)

[87] Oscar Reutersvärd. "Boullée—Creator or Eclectic?," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* (1961): 158. H. Rosenau, "A Reply to Dr. Reutersvärd," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* (1962): 64.

we are to believe the later accounts in Fontaine's journal, it was none other than his friend and

fellow student Thibault who drew and edited much of Boullée's work.[88]

Fontaine's ambitious project did not win. Instead, Jean Charles Alexandre Moreau's

design won first prize. [Figure 1.14] Moreau placed the sovereign's tomb within a domed

structure with impossibly thick walls placed over a double ring of Corinthian columns. A square

gallery and sets of stairs that lead up to funeral pyres surround this domed structure. Moreau

designed a coffered ceiling with an opening above the central tomb, eruditely evoking the

Pantheon as his model. Moreau's crisp delineation of solid mass and void and the absence of

dramatic landscape effects clearly set his work apart from Fontaine. According to the jury

members, the drawing technique was the main issue of contention: the original sketches that

Fontaine had submitted did not correspond to his final conception of the project. The jury found

that the imaginative qualities of his drawing detracted from the technical criteria, the focus of the

competition. "The student added in his elevation a stylobate at the summit of the pyramid, and

one sees in the cross-section between the half-circle niches which are above the interior

colonnade and stairs that crown an interval that were not seen in the sketch. This sketch presents

nothing more than a ramp without interruption to enter the pyramid and in the finished drawing

[*dessin au net*] the ramp is cut into several sections of degrees."[89] In addition to these technical

discrepancies, Fontaine's design incorporated a narrative element that had not been stipulated in

the competition rules. The wildly gesticulating figures found at the entrance to the monument

and the group pointing to the heavens located at the stepped side of the monument threatened to

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[88] Fontaine, *Journal,* II, 743. "[Thibault] devint, après avoir été employé par M Mique quelque temps à Versailles, l'élève, le dessinateur ou plutôt le rédacteur des projets de M. Boullée..."

[89] Quoted from Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers,* 72.

draw attention away from the structure. Instead, a properly tectonic grammar should have explained the function and purpose of the funerary monument.

The second place prize given to Fontaine prompted student discontent. Less than a week after the grand prix competition on August 29, the members of the academy wrote to the Comte d'Angiviller, the directeur général des bâtiments du roi, asking him to take disciplinary action against the students, described as so many rabble rousers threatening the jury's quiet process of closed-door deliberations. According to the *Procès-verbaux* for September 5, 1785, the students "assembled outside of the doors of the Academy, and behaved with a tumult and indecency that merits the greatest animadversion, blaming with extremity the judgment of the Academy and having even made use of whistling to insult the academicians at the exit of the meeting."[90] Roughly two months later, the academy received a reply from d'Angiviller. The Directeur général believed that the architecture students were in collusion with the students of the painting academy. The year before, the students of the painting academy had undertaken a similar act of insubordination, or what d'Angiviller termed a "displaced effervescence" at the awarding of the 1784 Grand prix.[91] When Jean-Germain Drouais, a young student of David, won the prize with his painting of *Christ and the Woman of Canaan*, his classmates and admirers paraded him down the streets in his triumphal victory.

An increasing amount of attention has been paid to the complex personal bonds forged and severed within the milieu of the *Académie royale de peinture*. According to Thomas Crow, the personal, familial relationships that permeated the studio of Jacques-Louis David, the painter who would rule over the arts in France during the revolution, threatened the official doctrines

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[90] Lemonnier, *Procès-verbaux*, vol. 9, 164.

[91] Lemonnier, *Procès-verbaux*, vol. 9, 167-8.

held by academy members, the archons of French painting during the ancien régime.[92] As Crow

has written, the public celebration of Drouais' talent in 1784, rather than being seen as an

affirmation of institutional judgment, was seen as "a victory over the system," a model of revolt

and opposition initiated by a new form of artistic practice emerging from David's studio.[93]

However, the tropes of filial rebellion that took place in painting described by Crow did not

necessarily carry over into the architectural academy. Fontaine's decision not to idealize a

moment of near glory reflects his conservative political convictions at the end of his life. For in

his later recollection of the events of the grand prix, Fontaine expressed surprise at the reaction

of his classmates. Few students won the grand prix on the first try, and Fontaine hoped to secure

the scholarship to Rome by competing the next year. But when he approached the jury to thank

them for awarding him second place, they immediately castigated him. "I did not have the

strength to respond to such unjust accusations, and I could not manage to prove to these

gentlemen that, far from having sought to incite my comrades to acts of insubordination, I was

absent when they took place, and I had censured them in the extreme as soon as they were

known to me."[94] He later described his youthful design as "somewhat convoluted."[95]

The disciplinary limits of the academy became manifest in Fontaine's experience during

the grand prix competition. While Drouais' victory sealed his genius before the public,

Fontaine's second place prize made him a reluctant hero. Following the events in the

architecture academy, D'Angiviller wrote that he "expressly forbids any tumultuous assembly

and noisy demonstrations, whether of approval or disapproval, on the judgments of the academy.

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[92] Thomas Crow, *Emulation: David, Drouais and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France* (New Haven and Los Angeles: Yale University Press; Getty Research Institute, 2006).

[93] Crow, *Emulation*, 22-26.

[94] Fontaine, "Mia Vita," quoted in Lucien Morel d'Arleux, "Les Voyages en Italie de Fontaine, Percier et Bernier, d'après leurs carnets de notes," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire et de l'Art français* (1934): 89.

[95] Quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 83.

They must receive with respect and in silence the decisions of their masters."[96] Fontaine's

project has often been seen as the instantiation of "visionary architecture" within the institutional

pedagogy of the academy. It was in fact the opposite. It suggests that even the committee

members had a difficult time imagining a purely picturesque architecture completely divorced

from the useful aspects of architectural drawing. The committee's claims that Fontaine's

drawings had technical errors that would have made it impossible to build an actual structure

from the plan indicates that even hypothetically, one had to be able to build based on the

rendering. The architects at the academy sought to establish a boundary between architecture

and painting, even though the writings of Boullée may have insisted otherwise. The following

year, the academy forbade "in the sketches as well as in the finished drawings, students from

including skies, landscapes, perspectives and in general anything that is not in domain of a

design that is purely geometric, and it [the academy] prescribes the greatest exactitude in the

conformity of the plan with the cross section and elevation."[97] This prohibition suggests the

theories taught by Boullée and Le Roy were not meant to be incorporated into a student

competition. It also indicates that the grand prix were meant to serve as pedagogical exercises,

not opportunities for achieving individual fame. Fontaine's near win of the prize for his funerary

monument would continue to haunt him for the rest of his life, as he sought to tame his youthful

vision in projects such as the Chapelle Expiatoire.

The pointed absence of Percier in Fontaine's recollections of his student period in Paris

suggests that the two had not yet formed a strong relationship (despite Fontaine writing that upon

their first meeting they "immediately" entered into their first pact of friendship). A comparison

of Percier and Fontaine's student work suggests that the architects had radically different

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[96] Lemonnier, *Procès-verbaux*, 167.

[97] Lemonnier, *Procès-verbaux*, vol. 9, 182.

conceptions. Percier sought to craft his vision with calculated adjustments and a careful modification of antique models. In contrast, Fontaine presented a radical vision of architecture's psychological effects and its picturesque elements, with a patent disregard for following the rules of the competition. It was Percier's adoption of a human scale and his interest in decoration that would prove instrumental to the architects' success. Even though Fontaine's ability to imagine grand buildings for sovereigns gained him the ear of Napoleon, it was Percier's quiet designs that effectively served as the basis of the emperor's visual power.

A Roman Education

For nearly a century since the founding of the royal academy, exceptional students such as Percier and Fontaine were granted the opportunity to visit Rome and directly study and experience ancient monuments. The eternal city was the locus of exchange among an international network of artists, connoisseurs, patrons and politicians all seeking to bring back a piece of the classical past to their respective home countries. The political events in France transformed what was an artistic rite of passage that would culminate in the security of a position in the royal administration upon return. After 1789, Rome became a terminus for students left stranded by the political uncertainties.

Percier and Fontaine's period in Rome represents the turning point in their education, as they moved away from the teachings of the academy in pursuit of their own interests. It is also where, according to Fontaine, the two architects forged their second pact of friendship (although as we shall see, it was initially a one-sided affair). In contrast to other architects who sought to revisit monuments that had already been studied by a previous generation of architects, Percier

and Fontaine sought out what they termed "modern Rome." The two architects undertook a systematic study that required placing monuments and residential buildings overlooked by others into a historical timeline.[98] On another level, Percier and Fontaine's period in Rome exemplifies the intimate exchanges that took place among painters, sculptors and architects at the Académie de France, where students learned from each other. The emphasis that Fontaine continually placed on being in an exclusive friendship with Percier only makes sense when read against the backdrop of the rivalries and unions forged in Rome. The city was an important place of exchange, where students could meet English connoisseurs, Italian artists and international patrons. Students could above all profit from the knowledge of their peers, initiating common study plans and embarking on trips together. As Marianne Roland Michel has indicated, such artistic friendships were often translated onto the pages of sketchbooks. Students studied objects side by side, comparing, correcting and copying each other's sketches, transforming mere studies into *librum amicorum*. This way of learning through friendship would become an integral part of Percier and Fontaine's working practices. Alongside the students working in their practice, the architects relied upon the friendships they had cultivated during their youth in order to create working teams that undertook the extensive commissions that Napoleon bestowed upon them.[99]

Percier and Fontaine had known each other since their early training at Peyre le jeune's studio. However, they did not actively begin collaborating and working together until their studies in Rome. The structured, competitive environment of the academy in Paris was not conducive to collaborative work. Once in Rome, students had greater freedom in terms of what they chose to study and who to study with. The collegial atmosphere of the Académie de France

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[98] Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 54.

[99] Marianne Roland Michel, "Dessiner à Rome au temps de Pajou," in *Augustin Pajou Et Ses Contemporains : Actes Du Colloque Organisé Au Musée Du Louvre Par Le Service Culturel Les 7 Et 8 Novembre 1997* (Paris: Documentation française, 1999), 290.

in Rome, housed in the Mancini Palace enabled the pensioned winners from the academies of painting, sculpture and architecture to work in concert to sketch the various ruins and monuments of Rome.

Beginning in 1778, the architecture academy had attempted to exert greater control over the curriculum of the *pensionnaires* in Rome. This was partly in response to the students from earlier years who had sent back drawings to the academy that incorporated elements of the picturesque decay and archaeological fantasy found in the prints of the Italian architect and engraver Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Piranesi was of course Le Roy's most vociferous detractor in the public debate on the origins of architecture then being waged in print.[100] Piranesi represented a view anathema to the institutional imperatives of the academy in his vaunting of Rome and Italian architecture over Le Roy's beloved Greek examples. Piranesi's fertile imagination and virtuoso draftsmanship went against the rationalist pedagogical control that French academicians sought to exercise over students.

The influence exerted by Piranesi was rampant in the generation of French architects that traveled to Rome before Percier and Fontaine. One example can be seen in Marie Joseph Peyre's drawings album.[101] Peyre l'aîné, as it will be recalled, had lectured at the academy on the importance of studying ancient monuments and their interpreters, Renaissance architects such as Palladio. Peyre's Rome-period album includes sketches of ruins done in a red chalk, which rather than being clean reconstructions, depict the structures in an elegant state of vegetal

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[100] See Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Observations on the Letter of Monsieur Mariette: with Opinions on Architecture, and a Preface to a New Treatise on the Introduction and Progress of the Fine Arts in Europe in Ancient Times.* Texts & Documents (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2002).

[101] Marie-Joseph Peyre, "Recueil de Morceau d'architecture et de divers fragmens de monumens antiques faite en Italie par Marie Joseph Peyre architecte du Roy ancient pensionnaire de sa majesté à Rome 1786," 86-A45, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, Los Angeles, California. See also Robin Middleton, "Some Pages from Marie-Joseph Peyre's Roman Album," in *The Persistence of the Classical: Essays on Architecture Presented to David Watkin* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2008), 73-97.

decay.[102] [Figure 1.15] A number of his pages are even devoted to studying the drapery of

Baroque sculptures. Other sponsored students were not interested in studying monuments at all.

Victor Louis, who was in Rome from 1756-9 as a grand prix winner, completely fabricated ruins,

much to the dismay of patrons like the Comte de Caylus who had commissioned images from

students like him in Rome, in order to produce his epic antiquarian publication, *Recueil*

d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines (1752-67).[103]

By the time Percier and Fontaine arrived in Rome a generation after Peyre, the academy

had established much more stringent rules for the *pensionnaires*. In direct response to the

influence that Piranesi had over French architects traveling to Rome, the academy wrote in a

1787 meeting that student reconstructions "had very rarely answered expectations; the majority

were more or less gigantesque compositions of an impossible execution...In vain the Academy

sought to establish a path more in keeping with our manners; its counsel, up to the present, has

had little success..."[104] Students were to undertake measured reconstructions of important

buildings and monuments in and around Rome. The director of the academy in Rome, François-

Guillaume Ménageot, reported back to Paris on the students' progress. In essence, students'

studies were to rely on a synthesizing reason in order to make whole the fragments found strewn

about Rome. As the academy stipulated, "the students of the Academy will be in charge of

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[102] For the extensive influence of Piranesi on French architects of the eighteenth century, see *Piranèse Et Les Français, 1740-1790 : Rome, Villa Medici : Dijon, Palais Des États De Bourgogne : Paris, Hôtel De Sully : Mai-novembre 1976* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1976).

[103] Stumped by a Roman-Etruscan inscription in one of Louis' drawings, the Comte de Caylus contacted a number of experts in Rome, to no avail. Finally, the Abbé Paciaudi, a friend and confidante, wrote to say that the connoisseur had been duped. "He copied from the portfolio of the ingenious Hubert Robert some drawings from his own compositions and an assemblage of other bits from fantasy, and gave them to you as if they were existing pieces that he pretended to have seen, to have copied on the spot!" The abbé went on to write that "That which is not pure invention was already printed a million times and the only assemblage is all that which is beautiful, but not real." The count never mentioned the incident, save through the omission of eight engravings from the volume the Comte de Caylus was preparing. François-Georges Pariset, "Notes sur Victor Louis," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire d'Art Français*, (1959), 43.

[104] Quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers,* 91.

elevating and drawing with exactitude ancient or modern monuments with different details of

which the objective, if the monument is whole, will be exactitude and precision. If the

monument presents nothing more than bare masses of marble and ornaments... his work will be

directed by penetration and judgment... in order to make known as much as it will be possible,

by the fragments, the resemblance of decorations, the ornament called back and restituted."[105]

The choice of the monument and the demonstration of its historical importance were left to each

student.

The finished academic *envoi*, the concentrated study to be sent back to the academy in

Paris, thus required the student to create an entire course of study in order to complete his task.

Pensionnaires relied upon secondary sources to help guide them through Rome's monuments,

such as guidebooks to Rome, commentaries on ancient monuments written by French and Italian

humanists and antiquarians, and the books of earlier architects such as Palladio.[106] The work of

previous *pensionnaires*, in particular Antoine Babuty Desgodets's *Les édifices de Rome: dessinés*

et mésurés très exactement (1682), which was reissued throughout the eighteenth century, was an

example of studying the ancient monuments that relied upon precise measurements and

renderings. [Figure 1.16] Desgodets's book remained an essential reference for architects into

the nineteenth century (Moreau, Fontaine's rival during the 1785 prix, would publish his

drawings of ornaments as a supplement to Desgodetz's text in 1800).[107] The central purpose of

making the trip to Rome was to study the monuments directly. Thus, students would go out

during the day to make informal studies of different buildings, collections and monuments in

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[105] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 90.

[106] For an example of the range of guidebooks available in the eighteenth century, see Oskar Pollak and Ludwig Schudt. *Le Guide Di Roma: Materialien zu einer Geschichte der römischen Topographie* (Vienna: B. Filser, 1930).

[107] Charles Moreau, *Fragmens et ornemens d'architecture dessinés à Rome, d'après l'antique, par le citoyen Charles Moreau, architecte, formant supplément à l'œuvre d'architecture de Desgodets* (Paris: Author, 1800).

sketchbooks. Later on, they would return to their rooms at the Mancini palace to correct and

clean up drawings, later preparing them on larger sheets.[108]

A sketchbook held at the Getty Research Institute that has been connected to Percier's

stay in Rome indicates the range of interests that a young French architect traveling to Rome

might have.[109] The sketchbook, purchased from the *papetier* Niodot,[110] purveyor to academy

students, melds the personal with the pedagogical. Included are recognizable architectural plans,

such as the Villa Doria Pamphili [Figure 1.17], articulated to the best of the student's ability.

The rendering indicates that while the draftsman may have had access to the entry area of the

villa, the further recesses of the building may not have been open to the public. Other antique

monuments, such as statues from the Vatican collection [Figure 1.18], appear to have been

studied in situ. Other images, such as the plan of a Roman tomb [Figure 1.19], were likely taken

from well-known sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Scattered throughout the

sketchbook are idiosyncratic modes of representation that contrast with the formal presentation

drawing, subject to the scrutinizing gaze of the patron, or the envoi. Even if we cannot decipher

the strange code located throughout this sketchbook, and even if is not by Percier,[111] the

sketchbook is of particular interest because it suggests first of all that the practice of architecture

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[108] For a typical pensionnaire's schedule, see Olivier Michel, "Peintres français à Rome au XVIIIe siècle jusqu'au néoclassicisme," in *Vivre et peindre à Rome au XVIIIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1996), 75-84.

[109] Charles Percier (attrib.), Sketchbook, 95-F35, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

[110] Although Niodot's plate mentions that the papermaker is the primary supplier to students of the royal academy of architecture, Jean-Philippe Garric has indicated to me that Niodot continued to use the same plate even after the dissolution of the royal academy in 1793, indicating that the sketchbook could have possibly been used later.

[111] A number of things indicate that the sketchbook is not by Percier. First, as becomes clear in the later part of this chapter, Percier avidly organized his drawings from Rome shortly after his return to Paris in 1791. It is extremely unlikely that such an important sketchbook would have escaped his notice. Second, as his education makes clear, Percier made very few drawings that did not directly refer to a specific building, or that were not intended for a specific project. Free-floating ornaments were very few. Third, the renderings do not have the same level of precision and confidence as the vast majority of Percier's drawings that are evident from his student period in Rome. Fourth, the pink code written throughout the book does not appear anywhere else on Percier's drawings.

encompassed a variety of ways of looking and studying (from nature as well as from prints and books), architectural thinking as mediated through careful modulations in draftsmanship and most importantly, that architects studying in Rome were turning their attention to decoration and ornament.

Percier and Fontaine each arrived in Rome in very different circumstances. Given the controversies of the 1785 prix de Rome competition, Fontaine could not hope to win a stipend to Rome the following year. He instead decided to embark on his own. Fontaine asked his father for financial support. He left in October, 1785, travelling for three months with Alexandre Dufour, another architectural student, and the sculptor Claude Michallon, who had won the grand prix in sculpture that year.[112] Because neither Fontaine nor Dufour had won the grand prix, they were not permitted to stay at Mancini Palace. They shared a room on the Via San Isidorio, near the Porta Pinciana. However, they continued to circulate with the other French pensionnaires such as Moreau, winner of the 1785 architecture grand prix, Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, the 1783 winner, and Drouais, the 1784 winner in painting. Fontaine's journey to Rome suggests that an increasing number of young artists made the trip to the eternal city of the arts independently in the hopes of developing the knowledge and credentials needed to secure future work. Learning in Rome provided the opportunity for reinvention, for Fontaine to become a desirable guide, in his own words, a "cicerone recherché."[113] Searching for some means of increasing his knowledge outside of the academy, Fontaine encountered an old gentleman named Nainville who decided to fill the role of educator to the young architect. It was from Nainville,

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[112] Morel D'Arleux, "Les Voyages en Italie," 89-90.

[113] Fontaine, *Journal*, II, 1328.

about whom little is known, that Fontaine learned the techniques of perspective, as well lessons in Italian and in the classics.[114]

Despite being plagued by financial uncertainties, Percier arrived in Rome in 1786 in much more triumphal circumstances. After Fontaine's disastrous second-place entry, Percier had quietly won the grand prix the following year in 1786 with a plan to "join the academies under the three principle divisions of human knowledge, namely the sciences, the letters and the arts."[115] [Figure 1.20] Revealing Le Roy's influence, Percier placed the academies within a Greek cross plan, with a circular, domed space at the central crossing, the circular assembly hall offset by four semi-circular exedral spaces. His block-like plan is in marked contrast to Peyre l'aîné's Baroque vision of joining the academies that was published in his book in 1765. [Figure 1.21] In Percier's design, each of the principal divisions of the "connoissances humaines" receives a separate wing. A long porch with 28 columns marks the entrance to Percier's design, with sculptures crowning the attic level. Two obelisks mark the beginning of a large set of steps leading up to the academy. Although the design is evocative of Boullée's 1783 project for a museum, particularly with the colonnaded drum crowning the central crossing, Percier's project is defined by a much smaller scale, and an internal disposition that does not follow the abstract pattern of layered symmetry found in Boullées plan. Above all, the self-contained nature of Percier's design and the absence of staffage contrast with Fontaine's wild grand prix submission a year earlier. The design, among several other student period plans by Percier, was included in the collection of student work published by Prieur. [Figure 1.22] Percier departed Paris the deserved winner of the grand prix.

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[114] Fontaine, *Journal*, II, 1307.

[115] Montclos, *Les prix de Rome*, 199.

A Pact Renewed and the "Etruscans" Begin Their Partnership

According to Fontaine, Rome was the site of his mythologized second pact of friendship with Percier, despite their divergent interests and working methods. Percier arrived in Rome with the architects Claude Louis Bernier, Auguste Baltard and the painter Guillaume Lethière on November 12, 1786. He delivered to Fontaine the news that, despite the uproar caused by his second place finish, Fontaine had been awarded a stipend at the Académie de France.[116] Fontaine's teacher Heurtier and the baron de Breteuil, the King's Household Minister, had intervened on his behalf, and d'Angiviller had decided to award Fontaine a scholarship and housing at the Académie de France. Fontaine would now be able to partake in the privileges of academic life at the Mancini Palace. "I saw him arrive with the greatest joy and we thus contracted, definitively, for the second time, in the closest manner possible, the sincere pact of friendship that previously each of us had formed in Paris and which endured, without the least trouble between us, until his death."[117]

In this recollection from 1853, Fontaine does not mention the name of Bernier. The silent presence in Percier and Fontaine's friendship, Bernier collaborated with them on a succession of projects, yet is hardly mentioned. Bernier decided to join Percier on his trip to Rome using his personal funds, which he gained from his employment at the firm of Le Grand and Molinos. He returned to Paris in 1788 while Fontaine and Percier remained in Rome. Bernier's drawings from his student period copy designs done by Percier, echoing his deep

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[116] Morel d'Arleux, "Les voyages en Italie," 95-6. There was also some confusion regarding Percier's pension as well, which was eventually rectified by D'Angiviller. See Du Portal, *Charles Percier*, 15-6.

[117] Fontaine, *Journal*, II, 1306.

admiration for Percier in particular.[118] Among the drawings are designs for a theater from 1791

and practical projects for private residences, a number of them evocative of the villas that he

studied during his short period in Rome. Bernier collaborated with Percier and Fontaine on their

first publication, *Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes déssinés à Rome*, engraving the

plates of architectural plans and elevations. However, he later sold his stake to Percier and

Fontaine, who excised his name from the second edition. Bernier continued to work for the two

architects as a manager of commissioned building projects, and shared his living quarters with

Percier at the Louvre until his death in 1830. Letters written from Percier's student, Hippolyte

LeBas in 1808 mentioning Bernier suggest that Fontaine, Percier and Bernier continued to work

closely together during the Empire period.[119] Among the obituaries for Fontaine, Étienne Jean

Delécluze's 1853 article in the *Journal des débats* alone underscored the importance of Bernier

in the "artistic triumvirate" of the three architects, all trained in Peyre le jeune's studio and all in

Rome during the same period. According to Delécluze, the famed chronicler of David's studio,

it was Bernier, who, by his "natural goodness and his conciliatory character, established and

maintained in the midst of this artistic triumvirate a concord, a friendship which did eternal

honor to those who composed it."[120] Delécluze's comment suggests that Percier and Fontaine

did not always see eye to eye on all matters. Their interactions often required the mediation of

Bernier.

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[118] The drawings, around 200, include works from his student-period projects at the academy, his period in Rome, and works from his professional activities. The curatorial file also includes a biographical sketch done by a previous owner of the drawings. I thank Renata Guttman for information. Claude-Lous Bernier, Drawings, DR1986, Canadian Center for Architecture Collection, Montreal, Canada.

[119] Hippolyte LeBas to Charles Percier. 1808, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA. Percier always maintained a playful relationship with Bernier, writing him a New Years greeting in Italian in 1810.

[120] Étienne Jean Delécluze, "Pierre Fontaine," *Journal des débats,* 26 Octobre 1853.

Percier and Fontaine's different approaches to architecture are evident in the *envois* that they undertook separately in Rome. In 1788, the royal academy asked Percier to reconstruct the column of Trajan. This marked the first time the academy had commissioned a student with producing a formal drawing to be included in a collection of antique monuments, to be held in its Paris library. This was a momentous task for the young artist, especially since the column's spiraling friezes and towering height made it difficult to measure and draw. It was a feat that even Piranesi was not able to accomplish.[121] The reconstruction project became something more than just a drawing or an exercise. It required a painstaking analysis of the existing monument and a careful consideration of textual and visual sources. The year-long project represented the culmination of the knowledge that Percier had gained from his studies in Rome, and his fulfillment of the academy's demands to bring back the ancient monuments through precise, reasoned renderings.

With Trajan's column, Percier had found the monument that would critically influence the rest of his career and his deep interest in the historical significance of architectural ornament. Writing to Bernier in April of 1789, Percier described the column as "eating up all of his time," in addition to having to creating a portfolio and not having finished any studies.[122] Held today at the library of the École des beaux-arts, Percier's drawings reveal that he was drawn to the sculptural detail more than the utilitarian elements of Roman architecture that attracted Fontaine. The nine drawings are rendered in India ink and wash on canvas-mounted paper. The combination of hard ink lines and soft gray wash creates the uncanny effect of smooth marble on paper. The column drawings show an exacting level of detail, from the inscription and war

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[121] Charles Percier to Claude Louis Bernier, 29 April 1789, in Ferdinand Boyer, "Charles Percier Documents Inédits (1789-1793)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français* (1962): 258.

[122] Ferdinand Boyer, "Charles Percier Documents inédits," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire et de l'art français* (1962): 257-62.

spoils found at the base [Figure 1.23] to the compressed scenes of war featured in the spiraling

bas-relief narrative illustrating the triumphs of the Roman emperor Trajan in the Dacian wars.

[Figure 1.24][123] Earlier, the Italian engraver Pietro Santi Bartoli's had delineated individual

sections of the spiraling bas-relief, picturing them as a succession of vignettes in his book on

Trajan's column.[124] In contrast, Percier chose to focus on the column's architectural elements,

depicting the base of the column, details of the sculptural ornaments, and a sectional view of the

column. He also drew ornamental details in extreme close-ups, reconstructing elements that had

decayed.

Percier's depictions of Trajan's column indicate his interest in the narrative possibilities

of sculpture, particularly when such sculptural decoration was intimately wedded to architectural

form. This tendency to place the narrative weight on the decorative elements of architecture

would manifest itself later when Percier and Fontaine were commissioned with creating imperial

residences on behalf of Napoleon. Furthermore, the distinctive way in which the column

narrated Roman history through an ensemble of decorative figures delicately wrapped around a

monumental architectural form could not have been lost on Percier.[125] Percier's drawings

reconstruct the damaged and effaced parts of the column, making visible portions of the structure

that could not be seen from an ordinary vantage point. Fontaine had pressed Percier to limit

himself to reconstructing the monument from a distance. Studying the bas-reliefs closely from

the scaffolding built was a dangerous endeavor, which had resulted in the death of a worker.

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[123] Charles Percier, Ms. 249, Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts. The drawings are bound in an album together with a manuscript by Vaudoyer.

[124] Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Colonna Traiana Eretta Dal Senato e Popolo Romano All'imperatore Traiano Augusto Nel Suo Foro in Roma. Scolpita Con L'historie Della Guerra Dacica La Prima e La Seconda Espeditione, e Vittoria Contro Il Re Decebalo* (Rome: Giacomo de Rossi dalle sue stampe in Roma, alla Pace, 1672).

[125] Giovanni Agosti, Vincezo Farinella et Giorgio Simoncini, *La Colonna Traiana e gli artisti francesi da Luigi XIV a Napoleone I* (Rome: Edizioni Carte Segrete, 1988). Louis Marin, "Visibilité et lisibilité de l'histoire : à propos des dessins de la colonne Trajane," in *Caesar Triumphans : rotoli disegnati e xilografie cinquecentesche da una collezione privata parigina, catalogue de l'exposition* (Florence: Institut français, 1984), 33-44.

Moreover, he saw little point in studying the bas-reliefs since, at the time, Fontaine viewed such details as not being of any architectural interest, writing that the "result of his enterprise would have rectified the engravings of Pietro da San Bartoli or Piranesi and to have merited praise as a draftsman, but architecture would gain little from his efforts." Percier replied that it was not only a duty bestowed upon him by academicians who had favored him, but also that it gave him pleasure to draw all of the bas reliefs found on the column.[126] The academicians who had commissioned the project were impressed with the "correction, intelligence and exactitude" of his reconstruction.[127]

The project had deep personal significance for Percier. When the young architect returned to Paris in 1791, it was unclear what had happened to his suite of drawings, following the calls to permanently close the academy. Percier wrote personally to members of the academy, asking for the drawings back if they could not be safeguarded in the library. David intervened on his behalf and the drawings eventually found their way back to Percier.[128]

As Garric has indicated, nothing could have been further from Percier's project than Fontaine's ambitious but ultimately failed plan to chart the waters of Rome.[129] Although Fontaine was not required to submit an envoi to Paris since he was not an official pensionnaire, he had nonetheless decided to send a study of Rome's aqueducts. Fontaine's interest in ancient waterworks resonated with his own family trade in the fountain business. Furthermore, as Garric notes, Rome's ancient aqueducts played a prominent role in the utilitarian aesthetics then being

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[126] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 23.

[127] Pâris, who was on the committee that had requested Percier reconstruct the column, was especially impressed. Pierre Pinon notes that Pâris had also drawn the column; the drawings can be found in the Pâris archive at Besançon. See Pinon, *Pierre-Adrien Pâris, 1745-1819, Architecte, et les monuments antiques de Rome et de la campanie*. Vol. 378 (Rome: École française de Rome, 2007).

[128] The letter and David's reply can be found at the Ecole des Beaux-arts, bound with Percier's drawings of Trajan's column.

[129] Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 44-7.

lauded by the Italian theorist Francesco Milizia, whose guide to Rome (1787) notoriously

celebrated the Spartan beauty of the Cloaca Maxima, Rome's ancient sewage system.[130] By

1788, Fontaine had completed an initial study and had sought to persuade Percier, then working

on Trajan's column, to accompany him on the project. In 1789, Fontaine decided to ask Jacques

Charles Bonnard, winner of the grand prix of 1788, to accompany him on a trip to Lake

Bracciano, where two of the most ancient and still functioning aqueducts had their source. The

trip did not go according to plan: while surveying the subject of their study, Fontaine's shotgun

was accidentally triggered, hitting Bonnard in the process. The project remained incomplete.

Nonetheless, Fontaine continued to maintain an interest in the practical side of architecture,

proposing and seeking to construct for Napoleon vast infrastructure projects that would rival

those he had studied in Rome. Yet it was always Percier's decorative projects that were realized

and ultimately celebrated.

What made Percier's friendship with Fontaine so unlikely was his natural gravitation

towards other more talented students at the Académie de France in Rome, in particular with the

painter Drouais. Percier maintained a correspondence with Drouais before he had left for Rome.

It was through a letter that Percier wrote to Drouais that Fontaine first found out about his new

status as a pensionnaire. This suggests that Percier and Drouais first developed their friendship

in Paris. Percier and Fontaine were not the only students eager to become friends with the

talented young painter. The beloved student of David, Drouais was already marked out as an

exceptional talent by his peers and his fame followed him to Rome.[131] Percier and Drouais's

intimate friendship is significant for understanding the broader context of neoclassical artistic

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[130] Francesco Milizia, *Roma, Delle Belle Arti Del Disegno. Parte Prima Dell' Architettura Civile* (Bassano: N.P.,1787).

[131] Crow, *Emulation.*

production emanating from the circle of David. In Rome, painters, architects, and sculptors

mingled and exchanged ideas in a much freer context than within the academy in Paris. Drouais

sparked a passion in Percier for the study of antiquity.

Recounting his arrival in Rome, Percier described the role that Drouais played as mentor,

tutor and companion. Lost in the midst of so many different eras, so many different works,

Percier was unable to begin his studies. It was Drouais who guided him out of his confusion.

Drouais was a guide who "had witnessed my anxiety, who shared my passion, and who

responded to my confidences with his friendship." In contrast to his relationship with Fontaine,

Percier found in Drouais a common spirit and an artist to emulate in both aesthetic conception

and execution. Percier described Drouais as friend and mentor. The talented painter helped to

establish Percier's daily study plans. Returning to the Mancini palace after a day of sketching,

Percier would see Drouais in order to have him look over his work, particularly his figural

drawings. But above all, Drouais endowed Rome's antiquities with life:

> Drouais showed me [Rome] with the soul and with the fingers, and
> he showed it to me not only in perspective, not only coldly aligned
> on paper, but standing on the terrain, living with all of the life of
> art and animated by all of the memories of history. Without
> Drouais, lost in the middle of Rome, I would have perhaps been
> lost to myself; with Drouais, I found myself again in Rome all that
> I was, and it is to him that I owe having learned all of Rome, in
> becoming myself all that I could be.[132]

Learning about antiquity was not simply an exercise in erudition for Percier. It was

linked intimately with the discovery of the self, suggesting that learning how to use a classical

vocabulary had a very personal dimension for an artist. Indeed, the memory of Drouais marks

the beginning point of Percier's copious drawn record of his time in Rome, today held at the

Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France. The largest corpus of drawings by the architect, Percier

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[132] Rochette, "Charles Percier," 250.

began assembling his drawings from Rome shortly after his return to Paris 1791. The images

range from tiny ink sketches of landscapes and crumbling rural structures to extensive recordings

in watercolor of decorative programs found at the Villa Madama, the Palazzo del Te and

different residences, art collections and gardens scattered throughout Italy.[133] In the first album,

Percier drew a plan of the Palais Mancini. Written carefully in red, he has indicated where

Drouais lived.

Fontaine's constant reiteration of his friendship with Percier — forged in the "closest

manner possible" — contrasts with the natural affinity between Percier and Drouais. The young

painter, who had received training in the studio of David and an education in the classics,

enabled Percier to develop his drawing skills in a way that Fontaine could not. For Drouais

possessed the gift of drawing the figure [Figure 1.25] — the visual metaphor par excellence of

the *beau idéal*, the form upon which Enlightenment aesthetic, moral and political ideals were

mapped.[134] Artistic alliances such as Percier and Drouais' friendship were necessary in the

charged environment of the academy. One incident at the academy highlights the tensions that

existed among the students over guarding their original work. Fontaine had borrowed copies of

Famiano Nardini's *Roma Antica* a guidebook to Rome, and Flaminio Vacca's *Memorie di varie*

antichità trovate in diversi luogia della Città di Roma,[135] from a fellow student named Auguste

Hubert, in an attempt to study and translate parts of the books for his own personal use.

According to Fontaine, this gave Hubert the occasion to sabotage his reputation, telling both

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[133] The albums also include later studies and the mock-ups for Percier and Fontaine's first publication, Palais, maisons et autres édifices. Blair Hixson Davis has treated the Roman drawings of the album, while Jeanne Duportal published a number of the drawings pertaining to France.

[134] Régis Michel, *Le Beau Idéal, Ou, L'art Du Concept, Musée Du Louvre, 17 Octobre-31 Décembre 1989* (Paris: Ministère de la culture, de la communication, des grands travaux et du Bicentenaire, Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989).

[135] Herbert probably lent Fontaine the 1771 edition of Nardini's book, since this edition included Vacca's memoirs in the text.

Percier and Drouais that Fontaine's "laborious and solitary life was actually that of an ambitious egoist," and that furthermore, he had used the borrowing of Hubert's books as a pretext for stealing his ideas on a study of the monuments of Rome.[136] Fontaine deemed the accusations serious enough to demand that he be allowed to respond to Hubert publicly, in front of Percier and Drouais. It was thanks to this episode and Fontaine's eventual exoneration from blame that he was able to enter into a closer relationship with Percier.

Despite the rivalries, secrecy and competing alliances, Percier and Drouais' close friendship in particular suggests that in Rome, architectural students depended upon the expertise of their peers in other media. In the specific case of Drouais, he demonstrated a perfectionist work ethic driven by personal desire and a destructive level of perfectionism rather than the need to fulfill rational criteria established in the academy's exercises. Drouais represented for his fellow students the possibility of an artistic selfhood dependent upon a self-determined painterly idiom that challenged the rules of the academy. He did not inform Ménageot of what he was working on, which made it difficult for the director to report back on his progress to the academy. That Percier found himself under the guidance of Drouais suggests that he sought to emulate the work ethic and aesthetic ideals of the young painter. However, the intimate education that Percier received from Drouais came to an end with the painter's death on July 15, 1788.

Moved by the early death of Drouais, the students of the Académie de France decided to erect a tomb in his memory at the church of Santa Maria in Via Lata at their own cost. [Figure 1.26] On a smooth slab of Carrera marble, three female figures in relief stretch their hands to etch the name of the artist just below the tripartite pediment. Architecture, holding a plan of a

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[136] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 17.

peripteral temple in one hand, lends her right hand to support the figure of painting, who has just

etched the final letter of Drouais' name. Sculpture embraces her to the left, and helps to steady

painting's stylus. At the rounded summit of the tomb is a medallion featuring Drouais' young

face in profile. Below the women's feet on a pedestal supporting the bas-relief and bookended

by two vases is an inscription in French of the loss felt by his country and his "young rivals" at

such a premature death. On a lower plinth, Drouais is yet memorialized again with a Latin

inscription beginning with his name: I. G. Drouais. Pictori.

This tomb marks the first time a commemorative monument was made by students for a

fellow student. Generally attributed to the sculptor Michallon, scholars have argued that Percier,

with the help of Fontaine, was responsible for the design.[137] As Patrick Ramade writes in

reference to the design of the three arts mourning in concert, Percier's "friendship authorizes and

explains such a gesture."[138] A delicate pencil and wash drawing held at the Bibliothèque de

l'Institut de France shows an alternative version of the monument. [Figure 1.27] Percier's

drawing shows small discrepancies in the architectural elements of the tomb, from the added

cornice between the central bas relief and upper section, and a different proportioning of the

lower plinth.[139] Ottomeyer has connected this early tomb project to a subsequent commission

that Percier received from the painter François-Xavier Fabre for a tomb to the Countess of

Albany.[140]

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[137] Stella Rudolph, "1789: Claude Michallon e i Pensionnaires per la morte del Drouais," *Labyrinthos* III (5-6): 54-75; and Patrick Ramade, *Jean-Germain Drouais* (Rennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, 1985), 151. Rudolph focuses in large part on the work of Michallon, but as Ramade and Ottomeyer suggest, the design for the monument was based on Percier's designs.

[138] Ramade, *Drouais*, 151.

[139] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 97.

[140] Ferdinand Boyer, "Charles Percier, F.X. Fabre et le tombeau de la comtesse d'Albany à Florence," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français* (1963): 133-9.

However, this search for certain authorship misses the very point of the monument — that never had a monument dedicated to a painter been articulated through the concerted mourning of three different arts, made by equal peers for another equal.[141] Before John Flaxman or Antonio Canova, both of whom became close acquaintances of Percier in Rome, this tomb utilized the vertical slab tomb as a Neoclassical motif in funerary monuments.[142] It marked the passage from student work to the mature contemplation of a visual language of austerity and an economy of gestures that the students came to accept as a fitting tribute to their peer. Drouais' tomb gained instant success both as a public testament to the artist and as the articulation of an aesthetic vision in its own right. More importantly, it shows that for the young *pensionnaires* in Rome, they did not require an important state commission to produce work that was meaningful and significant. Their friend and fellow artist was important enough to be commemorated and immortalized. Michallon made a plaster copy that was sent to Paris to be displayed in Alexandre Lenoir's famed Musée des monuments français, and another model for the Salon of 1793.

The monument to Drouais marked an important cornerstone in Percier and Fontaine's relationship, where they discovered that their artistic friendships could be transformed into active working collaborations. Percier never liked working alone, and always sought out collaborators with whom to share his projects. This placed Fontaine, the lesser talent, in an optimal position, particularly after the death of Drouais. Although Fontaine could not offer the same knowledge and skills to Percier, he could nonetheless serve as a business partner and confidante, encouraging Percier in his activities. Following the incident with Hubert in Rome, Fontaine began cultivating his relationship more actively with Percier. The two began embarking on

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[141] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 99.

[142] Leopoldo Cicognara was the first to describe Drouais' tomb as the first usage of the slab tomb type in Neoclassical funerary monuments. Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 101.

sketching excursions together. According to anecdotes of their period in Rome, Percier and

Fontaine's secretive interest in monuments and buildings neglected by their peers earned them

the nickname, "the Etruscans" from their schoolmates.[143] The term apparently was intended to

evoke their interest in what was perceived as archaic forms, as well as their obscure activities.

Percier and Fontaine would steal away from the academy in the early morning, working far from

the rest of the pensionnaires, hiding their canvases behind rocks and returning to retrieve them.[144]

This concerted study formed the basis of their first co-authored publication, *Palais, maisons et*

autres edifices dessinés à Rome (1798), and the sketches that they brought back to Paris would

serve as the inspiration for their interior decorations. This signaled their turn away from Greek

architecture as the ideal origin of architecture taught by Le Roy in his lectures. They began

cultivating an interest in buildings from the Renaissance, the Middle Ages and the late Roman

monuments that had been intentionally disregarded by the antiquarian as a result of his public

debate on architecture with Piranesi.[145] Most importantly, they organized their idealized

reconstructions in a historical timeline that unlike Winckelmann, attempted at a more

comprehensive trajectory that included humble buildings alongside larger palaces. Their book

positioned Renaissance architects as interpreters of antiquity without whom it would be

impossible to access the classical past. It was through this co-authored publication that Percier

and Fontaine officially sealed the terms of their professional partnership. Cramped in a shared

attic room upon their separate returns to Paris, Percier and Fontaine began collaborating based on

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[143] Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 56.

[144] "Charles Percier," in *Biographie Universelle, ancienne et moderne*, Joseph-François and Louis Gabriel Michaud, eds. (Paris: Michaud Frères, 1811-1862), vol. 76, 427.

[145] See Robin Middleton, "Introduction," in *The Ruins of the Most Beautiful Monuments of Greece* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004).

economic necessity, political survival and professional ambitions, inadvertently forging a modern form of architectural practice in the midst of the Terror.

Destruction and the Museum — Other Histories in Revolutionary Paris

Although Percier and Fontaine are today most closely associated with their official work for Napoleon Bonaparte, their architectural oeuvre was nonetheless heavily conditioned by the charged environment of the French Revolution. For Percier especially, this period was definitive because of his own political beliefs and the protection and opportunities provided to him by the painter Jacques-Louis David. A number of characteristics marked the architecture of the Revolutionary period. First, the humble economic background of architects like Percier became championed as a mark of social distinction. Second, the new public patronage of architectural projects collapsed the political and personal convictions of the architects. Third, and perhaps most importantly, through revolutionary-period projects which sought to articulate the new French nation, a new generation of architects including Percier and Fontaine sought to found a new architectural theory no longer tied to the rhetoric of the orders, which was deeply entwined with ancien régime notions of social rank and hierarchy. It is significant that Percier and Fontaine were stage decorators during a period when theater was at the forefront of Neoclassical aesthetics' direct engagement with the spectacle of politics and the revolution. Their work at the Paris opera would play a decisive role in the manipulation of the effects of the interior in order to translate the architectural notion of *caractère* in the interior, a topic that will be discussed in Chapter 2.

It is difficult to imagine how different the Paris that Percier and Fontaine returned to must

have been from the city they had left behind as students. Surveying Percier and Fontaine's work

during the French Revolution offers a picture of a vastly different architectural market than that

of the *ancien régime*. Before the events of 1789, young architects would begin apprenticing

under an architect, later finding work in an individual capacity for a noble patron, or working as

part of the royal administration. Yet the traditional career paths for students returning from

Rome disappeared during the 1790s. The Revolution marked a decisive generational shift, as the

senior members of the architecture academy with strong ties to the monarchy were jailed,

executed or went into forced exile.[146] In a notebook, Fontaine dramatically penned his initial

reaction upon returning to the French capital: "Alas, what a difficult change! In contrast to light,

I heard the savage singing of trumpets and the high notes of death; and, I will see members and

weapons dragged in rivers of blood."[147] Without institutional protection, Percier, Fontaine and

their peers were thrust into the fraught circumstances of the political arena, subject to the

changing factions, decrees and the cultural disputes about what the official art of the Revolution

should look like.[148]

When Fontaine returned to Paris in 1790 and Percier the following year in 1791, they

sought work in whatever capacity they could find, even providing designs for wallpaper and

trinkets. Theater decorations, decorative objects and furnishings harnessed to a political purpose

became the mainstays of architectural practice, rather than the side projects of architects pursuing

more complex intellectual work within the milieu of the academy. Within the fraught political

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[146] Boullée and Ledoux were both jailed, while Pierre-Adrien Paris went into forced exile. Despite the political clemency extended to him by David, Pâris refused to work in any official capacity after the execution of Louis XVI, choosing to retire instead.

[147] Quoted from Morel d'Arleux "Les voyages," 100.

[148] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

social circumstances of Paris in the 1790s, Percier and Fontaine relied on the intimate network of friends they had cultivated in Rome. In 1798, they formed a society called the Société du Duodi. Composed of twelve friends who had all worked in Rome, the members of the society met every second (duodi in the republican calendar) of the month at a restaurant owned by Filard on the Boulevard du Montparnasse. They were barred from any political discussion, and spoke instead about the arts and above all, reminisced about their memories of Italy.[149]

On a broader level, Percier and Fontaine's active work during the revolutionary period reveals the potent role that history would come to play in their work. Within the context of Percier and Fontaine's work, the notion of historicism emerged from the rubble of monuments destroyed. For as the modes of architectural practice were altered, so too did its representational language of monuments. What became important during this period was not only artistic production but, as Dario Gamboni and others have shown, its destruction.[150] In the wake of zealous political campaigns, foreign wars, general looting and pillaging, all done in the name of ushering in a new era, the French Revolution brought about the complete *bouleversement* of the previous meaning and function of buildings. Cloisters were used as horse stalls, churches as armories. While the symbols of the monarchy had to be destroyed in order for the new language of the Republic to be established, rampant vandalism brought recognition of the need to preserve monuments of *national* patrimony. The Revolution was thus presented with two conflicting

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[149] Fontaine, *Journal*, I, 568, note 106. The members were: Charles-François Callet (architect), Louis-Marie-Joseph Morel d'Arleux (painter), Bernier, Pierre-Jules Delespine (architecture), Thibault, Hippolyte Lecomte (architect), who was replaced by the sculptor Auguste Fortin at his death, Guillaume Guillon-Lethière (painter), Jean-Joseph-Xavier Bidault (painter), Alexandre Dufour (architect), Fontaine, Augustin-Marie Beudot (architect), and Percier. The members of the society were engraved in an album of portraits held today at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[150] Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art : Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997). Michel Fleury, Guy-Michel Leproux, and Louis Réau. *Histoire du Vandalisme : Les Monuments détruits de l'art français*. (Paris: R. Laffont, 1994). See also Naginski, Erika. *Sculpture and Enlightenment* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2009), especially the last chapter.

aims, destruction and preservation. The new government was at times hard pressed to determine which was more appropriate to its ultimate aims. As Christopher Greene writes, these opposing actions were the result of the need to purify: "Was it not laudable for the citizens of Franciade, formerly Saint-Denis, to demolish some of the royal tombs in the abbey church and use the rubble to create a grotto in a mountain erected for a festival in honor of the memories of Marat and Le Peletier? Such symbolic destruction was psychologically, ideologically, and politically necessary."[151]

It is in this context that Percier and Fontaine's "Neoclassicism" also came to encompass the French historical monuments being destroyed by decree of the republican government. Their work during this period is important in order to fully understand the place of their interior decorations within the architectural context of post-revolutionary France. If we think of the revolutionary period as lying at the early frontier of historicism, it is because architects such as Percier and Fontaine participated in the various committees, recording, then destroying and preserving in their designs the memory of sites such as the Basilica of St. Denis and Fontainebleau. The fragmentary state of the remaining monuments showed that the historical specificity of a particular building was most manifest in the arrangement and choice of decoration and ornament. And while Rome remained the touchstone for the classical language that Percier and Fontaine hoped to preserve in their publications, notably the *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, the political exigencies of the period led them to recuperate once again the historical fragments destroyed by the revolution.

Although the revolutionary period marks the inception of Percier and Fontaine's professional union, in many ways, it was Percier who truly espoused the aesthetic and ideals of

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[151] Christopher M. Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir and the Musée des monuments français during the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies*, 12/2 (Autumn 1981), 202.

the revolution. Shortly after his return to Paris in 1791, Percier resumed his role as a teacher of a

successful private atelier. He undertook his teaching work alongside his duties as a member of

the *Commune générale des arts*. His task, as one of the two chosen architects of a committee,

was to record and destroy the signs and monuments of the monarchy. It was through his work as

a member of the Commune that he began his collaborations with Alexandre Lenoir and the

Musée des monuments français.[152] Percier also designed the French Republic's first version of

the 500 and 1,000 franc banknotes. As Garric has suggested, Percier's extensive activities

during this period paints a vastly different picture from the image of the shy artist retreating from

public duties described by his biographers.[153]

Percier's growing reputation under the protection of David provided protection for

Fontaine, who quietly maintained royalist sympathies. Fontaine's father had worked as a

waterworks engineer for the Prince de Conti at the Chateau de l'Isle Adam and his family

connections to the nobility made him suspect. His early projects before his return to Paris

suggest that he initially hoped that he could secure a position as a private architect to Étienne

Charles Loménie de Brienne, the former archbishop of Toulouse and finance minister of Louis

XVI.[154] Moreover, Fontaine's clandestine travel to England following the storming of the

Tuileries Palace on August 10, 1792 did not aid in his already politically precarious position.

Following a short stay of a couple of months in London, Fontaine returned to Paris after his

father begged him to return. For shortly after his arrival in England, the revolutionary

government had decreed that all the property and possessions belonging to the relatives of

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[152] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 165-183. The collaboration between Lenoir and Percier resulted in a large album of drawings held in the Louvre today. Lenoir album, RF 5279, Cabinet des arts graphiques, Louvre, Paris, France.

[153] Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 71.

[154] Jean-Philippe Garric, *Percier et Fontaine*, 2011, 54.

émigrés would be confiscated, in order to prevent exiles from leaving. Thanks to Percier's

connections, Fontaine was able to continue working upon his return from London.

Despite an active career awaiting him in Paris, Percier was reluctant to leave Rome.

Percier had established strong bonds with fellow French students at the academy, as well as

making new friendships with famed artists in the city. In Rome, the talented student had become

friends with the English sculptor John Flaxman and the Italian sculptor Antonio Canova. The

young student maintained correspondences with the two artists who were celebrated for reviving

antiquity with their articulations of the *beau idéal*. Canova had even provided Percier with

connections, introducing him to Count Stanislas Poniatowski, for whom Percier designed a villa

before his departure from Rome.[155]

During his voyage, Percier compared monuments seen in different cities to those he had

studied in Rome. In the margins of a drawing of the priory of Malta, Percier wrote "the last

sketch done in Rome," dated March 9, 1791. Perhaps sensing that he would never return, Percier

made sure to painstakingly record the monuments and buildings that struck his eye as he slowly

made his way back from Rome. In a letter written to John Flaxman in 1793, Percier reverentially

describes passing through Ancona, Rimini, Ravenna, and on to Bologna, recording the stylistic

shifts found in ancient triumphal arches as well as churches and theaters. In Venice, Percier

writes that he was completely "disoriented," dazzled by the paintings, marble and the canals,

despite their bad smell. Marveling at Mantua's Palazzo del Te, Percier notes that the fountains

of Brescia reminded him of Rome. At each stop, he describes a monument and seeks its

connection to antiquity, such as the amphitheater and triumphal arches in Verona. After

traveling through Lodi and Milan, and arriving in Genoa, Percier ends the description of his

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[155] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 102-3.

journey with "Adieu Belle italie non te vedeo mai piu queste parole sono teribile per me."[156] In

his letter to Flaxman, Percier mentions that upon his return to Paris, he began organizing a

portion of his drawings made during his voyage and hoped that Flaxman would come to Paris to

look at some of them. Percier's letter to Flaxman indicates that it was during the 1790s that

Percier and Fontaine began to edit the materials they had gathered in Rome. While Percier

began to systematically organize his drawings into albums, he also initiated preparations for

publish a shared study of Rome's modern monuments with Fontaine. Percier kept the studies

that he had done in Rome separate from the work he undertook with Fontaine. And although the

two architects were increasingly identified as a professional partnership, Percier continued to

undertake independent projects and oversee the students in his private atelier.

Just as Percier was organizing his memories and images of Rome, he began encountering

the alternative visions of history being unearthed in the context of Revolutionary Paris. In 1793,

Percier became a member of the *Commune générale des arts*. Beginning as a society of artists

organized by David in 1790 to protest the elitist Académie royale de peinture, the Commune

générale took on a more active role in the cultural policies of the National Assembly when David

was elected deputy to the convention in October of 1792. The commune's anti-monarchial role

sharpened after the execution of Louis XVI on January 21, 1793. David sought to bring the

artists' organization more firmly in line with the government's republican politics, opening the

organization to artists of all genres and backgrounds. Following David's election as a deputy, a

series of decrees were established in order to destroy the signs of the monarchy, with the

commune placed in charge. The first article stipulated that "the municipality of Paris will give

orders that in all of its *arrondissements*, all of the sculpted or painted objects on public

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[156] Charles Percier to John Flaxman, 13 November 1791, Flaxman Letterbook, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.

monuments, whether civil or religious, which present the attributes of royalty or praises heaped upon kings, will be erased or changed."[157] On July 22, 1793, the commune voted for six commissaires: for painting, Jean-Baptiste Regnault and François-André Vincent, David's two rivals; for sculpture, Étienne-Pierre-Adrien Gois and Philippe-Laurent Roland; and Percier and Charles De Wailly in charge of architecture. Fontaine was named a substitute.[158] Replacing the academy, the work of the commune provided administrative organization to the national convention's artistic demands, as well as establishing institutional rules for the fine arts. Most importantly in the case of architecture, its emphasis on getting rid of the markers of royalty renegotiated the relationship between architectural structure and ornament, making it clear that painted and sculpted markers of royalty were in fact contingent to the structural integrity of the monument. The members of the commune argued that it was only the discerning eyes of artists that could properly decide which monuments needed to be destroyed or effaced, and which preserved for the benefit of public instruction. All other acts of destruction by "subaltern agents" were nothing more than acts of vandalism.[159]

Through Percier's work for the commune and the commission temporaire des arts,[160] a curiosity for the ornament, sculptures, paintings and monuments of different periods, from medieval tombs to the French renaissance tempered his classically trained eye. As a commissaire d'architecture, Percier was in charge of destroying royal attributes and any monuments that bore the trace of France's clerical or feudal pasts. But for Percier, this work of

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[157] Henry Lapauze, ed., *Procès-verbaux de la Commune générale des arts de peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure: (18 Juillet 1783-tridi de la Lre décade du 2e mois de l'an II) et de la Société populaire et républicaine des arts (3 Nivôse an II-28 Floréal an III)* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1903), XXIX-XXX.

[158] Lapauze, *Procès-verbaux*, 22.

[159] Lapauze, *Procès-verbaux*, XXXIV.

[160] The commune was replaced at the end of 1793 by the Société populaire et républicain des arts, which accused the commune of being, like the academy, elitist. The republican society was in large part superseded by the Institut national, created in 1795, which echoed the academy structure of the ancien regime.

destruction simultaneously carried with it an archival impulse to preserve through drawings the objects he felt were worthy of being recorded. During trips to the chateau of Ecouen and Montmorency in 1793, Percier carefully depicted ornament details, remarking to his friend Hurtauld that despite the irregular building style, the "details were remarkable."[161] Percier's drawings of the Chateau d'Ecouen, Montmorency and the Abbaye de Saint-Denis were collected into an album which is today located at the Musée Vivenel at Compiègne. The album features rare drawings of the original interior disposition of the choir and chevet, while notes on the tomb of Dagobert describe its original polychromy. The images of Saint-Denis were later consulted by Violet-le-Duc during his restoration of the church in the mid-nineteenth century.

It was in the context of Percier's collaborations with Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des monuments français that the architect truly developed his interest in historical decorations and their significance for his own projects. Scholars have emphasized the critical role that Alexandre Lenoir, the founder of the Musée des monuments français, played in a new spatialization of history through the creation of what is often considered the first modern museum. However, few scholars have noted Percier's extensive involvement in the making of Lenoir's museum. In 1790, Lenoir petitioned the revolutionary government to create a depot where the confiscated remains from the church could be stored and transformed into biens nationaux.[162] By 1796, the depot had been transformed into an official museum overseen by the ministry of the interior. Even after the creation of the national museum at the Louvre, Lenoir was allowed to continue transferring sculptures and other objects to his collection. In 1800, he had amassed over 500 objects in the convent.[163]

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[161] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 165.

[162] Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir," 209.

[163] Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir," 212.

The museum, located in the former convent of the Petit-Augustins in Paris, not only helped to preserve the statuary, relics and objects that had been vandalized — or intentionally uprooted — from their royal structures such as the chapel of Saint-Denis. Lenoir envisioned placing them within a series of rooms devoted to different historical periods, an arrangement that famously provided Jules Michelet his earliest notions of what history should look like.[164] An entrance area presented visitors with the museum's entire historical trajectory, from thirteenth to eighteenth century French art. The museum's point of origin was "Saracen architecture," which had its roots in French Crusaders bringing back Islamic art in order to build Gothic cathedrals. Working with Lenoir, Percier documented numerous objects in the early museum, and provided illustrations for Lenoir's catalog of the museum's holdings, which documented the museum's increasing collection. Yet Percier's drawings were not documents alone. Lenoir himself acknowledged that "Citizen Percier, a very distinguished artist, made several precious drawings at the Depot [museum] and I consider myself happy to be the owner of one of his drawings which I consider as a monument."[165]

Percier contributed to Lenoir's extensive published catalog and helped articulate the historically themed spaces of the Musée des monuments français. The "Lenoir album" at the Louvre Museum contains several unsigned drawings by Percier. [Figure 1.28] In particular, one of the albums included in the collection titled "Croquis fait au Musée des monuments français" contains unsigned sketches, principally attributed to Percier, of the objects and monuments he

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[164] See Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images : Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). On the museum's importance for architectural history, see Anthony Vidler, *The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987).

[165] *Archives du musée des monuments français.* Inventaire général des richesses d'art de la France (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1883-), t. 1. 24. XXV.

saw at the recently converted convent.[166] The images of medieval and French renaissance tombs

were used as preparatory drawings for the engravings that Percier himself produced for Lenoir's

museum catalog.[167] It is likely that Percier's hand guided the antique-inspired frontispieces that

opened several volumes of Lenoir's publication. Lenoir and Percier continued to work at the

museum into the Consulate period. During a trip undertaken with Lenoir in 1799, Percier's drew

the château d'Anet and of Gaillon. Lenoir decided that the demolished structures could

nonetheless be "turned to a profit" for history's sake:

> Thus I conceived the project to transform the ruins into a profit for
> the capital, and to form within the interior of the museum two
> classical courts of French architecture, one of the fifth century, and
> the other of the sixteenth… Mr. Percier and I went to Anet. The
> monument was drawn and measured in a way so that it could be
> rebuilt in Paris, and to frame the colonnade of the courtyard of
> Anet with that of the Museum. The same operation was done for
> the use of the château of Gaillon."[168]

Percier was responsible for drawing up the plan for the construction of the museum's

sixteenth-century room. Furthermore, as a letter by Lenoir written to Peyre fils (the son of

Marie-Joseph Peyre) around 1800 makes clear, Percier played an active role in composing the

architectural elements that would distinguish different historical rooms, according to the

"character that befits the physiognomy of the centuries that I would like to paint." Lenoir writes

that Percier, "architect-designer," would be in charge of directing "the plans, moldings, profiles,

and in general all that applies to the stereometry of architecture." Based on drawings of the

museum's rooms attributed to Percier, Ottomeyer has suggested that the architect was largely

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[166] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 173. Although a number of sketches from the Musée des monuments français are also in the Institut de France collection.

[167] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 174.

[168] Quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 174.

responsible for the thirteenth century room, remarkable for its adoption of a vibrant polychromy scheme of gold, blue and red.[169]

Like the bas-reliefs of Trajan's column intensely studied by Percier, the artifacts on display at Lenoir's museum embodied a vision of history born of the coordinated articulation of fragments. Percier's intense involvement with the museum indicates the careful attention that the architect paid to decoration and the reconfiguration of interior space. The arrangement of the historically-themed rooms required a different type of composition and layout than the commission for a private apartment or hôtel. For the architectural decoration bore the weight of historical significance. Utilizing a particular profile or cornice or molding in one room would enable the viewer to differentiate one historical period from another. [Figure 1.29] Furthermore, the context of the museum created an alternative constellation of meaning by bringing an equal level of attention to the sculptural fragment, artifact and architectural decor.

Fontainebleau: From the Limits of Classicism to a History of the Arts

It is in the context of studying the French monuments being destroyed and historically reconfigured in Lenoir's museum that Percier penned one of his only theoretical writings on decoration. Even though Percier emphasized time and again the major influence that his time in Rome had on the aesthetic cultivated with Fontaine, his independent studies during the Revolution expanded his historical and stylistic interests. One of the monuments that made the most memorable impression on Percier was Fontainebleau, evidenced by numerous drawings of the Renaissance chateau contained in Album Ms 1014 at the Institut de France. [Figure 1.30]

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[169] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 176.

This extremely complex monument, built during France's budding engagement with Renaissance Italy, served as a touchstone for Percier's decorative work and his fascination with a dialectic of the decorative and structural, the sensuous and rational, color and its absence, all of which described a period known as the origins of French classicism.[170]

Fontainebleau is important because it provided Percier with a model for how to adapt the classical language of antiquity to a French context. Fontainebleau deserves to be described in depth because it represents the unconscious backdrop to Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration projects. The architectural innovations of Fontainebleau had made a deep impression on Percier during the revolutionary period, and its influence can be felt toward the end of the *Recueil de décorations intérieure*s, as Percier and Fontaine sought to create a new decorative language of empire from earlier ornamental arrangements.

In a lengthy note on the ballroom of the chateau, Percier writes that he had visited Fontainebleau in his "earliest youth," from which he had "confused memories, having conserved nonetheless the desire to return." Viewing Fontainebleau for the second time after his return from Rome in 1791, Percier writes that the bizarre ensemble of the chateau complex dissatisfied him, at the same time that the parts developed by Serlio, Rosso Fiorentino and Nicolo dell Abate called him back, evoking the monuments he had seen in Italy. It was above all the ballroom that made the greatest impression on him, despite its awkward disposition within the dilapidated chateau. Although it is Fontaine who is commonly acknowledged as the historian of the partnership, writing not only his personal history in his journal but writing an extensive account of Parisian architecture for Tsar Alexander I and a historical account of the Palais Royal, Percier's writing on Fontainebleau offers an exceptional glimpse into his views on architecture

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[170] Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: the Invention of Classicism* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

and decoration essential to understanding the ultimately heteroclite aesthetic of the *Recueil de decorations intérieures*. Furthermore, the attention he paid to isolated interior spaces such as the ballroom at Fontainebleau indicates a reversal of sorts from the early architectural lessons learned in the context of the academy. For the careful attention paid to the composition and details of the interior corresponded to a silence on a building's exterior structure. Like the Musée des monuments français, interior space marked an *epoché* disengaged from a broader context.[171]

For Percier, Fontainebleau exemplified the perfect union of the different arts working together in concert to create a decorative ensemble. The Fontainebleau album the Institut de France contains 98 drawings of sculpture, ornament, paintings and architectural details pertaining to the château. It was in 1528 after his return from being held captive by his great rival Charles V that Francois I began large scale work at Fontainebleau to transform the dilapidated hunting lodge and convent into a magnificent château complex. According to Giorgio Vasari, the king himself personally requested an artist who "understood painting and stucco work" to decorate his château, after hearing of Giulio Romano's work at the Palazzo Te for Federico II, Duke of Mantua.[172] This work of *meraviglie,* an exemplary document of Italian mannerism, played with all of the conventions and rules of architecture and decoration, established by Romano's master, Raphael. At Mantua, Primaticcio worked under Romano for six years, becoming his highest paid assistant as a specialist in stucco.[173] Even Rosso, who had largely worked for ecclesiastical patrons, also had training in stucco works as early as 1524,

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[171] On the philosophical significance of Husserl's usage of epoché in relation to the Romantic conception of landscape painting, see Joseph Koerner, Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[172] Giorgio Vasari. *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf:, 1996) IX, 146.

[173] Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France*, 108.

where he had to paint frescoes and stuccos at Santa Maria della Pace.[174] At Fontainebleau, Francis I built up a lavish residence, site of a bath, gardens, gallery and library. Work continued on the "pleasure palace" at the time of his death in 1547.

It was the interior of Fontainebleau that attracted Percier's attention, in particular the lavish *Salle de bal*. [Figure 1.31] Percier's album contains a mock-up for a title page as well as recopied notes suggest that he planned on publishing a book on Fontainebleau, a "parallèle" type publication that would have compared the Italianate ballroom with other similar models found in Italy.[175] Included are intricate watercolor studies recording the arrangement of stucco figures framing the paintings by Primaticcio and Niccolo dell'Abate. Notes written at the margins of the images indicate which portions of the decorative ensemble were "en relief," and which parts were already decaying.[176] Other drawings undertake reconstructions of the ceiling painting. Percier's drawings were the last images that recorded the original state of the ballroom, before it was destroyed in order to make room for new renovations.

Percier recorded careful notes of the decorative program of Fontainebleau's gallery. The chateau's exterior simplicity contrasts to the rich transformations that took place within the gallery, planned as part of the extensive renovations by Breton listed in an official contract in 1528. Originally intended as a corridor linking the royal residence to the converted convent of Mathurins on the west side, the gallery took on a more prominent size, becoming a "series of spaces articulated on a rigorously symmetrical plan, destined surely to serve for more than

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[174] Sylvie Béguin, "Le directeur des travaux: Maître Roux," in *Revue de l'Art*, 16-17 La Galerie François Ier au Château de Fontainebleau, (1972): 102.

[175] It would have included the Sala Regia of the Vatican, the Salone dei Cinquecento at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, the Sala Regia of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, and Grand Salle of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. Charles Percier, annexe "Collection de dessins de Feu M. Percier, concernant le Palais de Fontainebleau," MS 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.

[176] Charles Percier, MS 1014, page 16, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.

circulation."[177] The general layout of the gallery consists of fourteen bays, each containing a central painted tableau flanked by painted and stucco ornamentation, with a cartouche below and the king's emblem of the salamander above. The two end bays feature oval tableaux painted in oil, in contrast to the rectangular panels featured on the long sides of the gallery. These bays would have originally been pierced with windows on both the north and south sides, with a cabinet for the king located in the center of the north side. Henri Zerner writes that one has to imagine past the extensive renovations undertaken over the centuries and instead envision "a completely controlled environment — a decorative scheme that animated all surfaces, constituting an enclosed capsule, like a precious chest, the ornamentation of which would be turned inside."[178] In the most famous attempt to "solve" the gallery's complex iconographical program, Dora and Erwin Panofsky traced a connected sequence of obscure allegories that referenced the personal events of the king's life.[179] But they barely touched upon the decorative elements teeming with life, which constantly overstep their boundaries, spilling into or intruding onto the fresco and oil panels that the Panofskys limited their analysis to. Shaped into imaginative pieces of strapwork, molded into frames dripping with sensuous fruit and languid bodies, the stucco negotiates a place alongside painted cartouches, frescoes of erudite mythological scenes, and richly carved wood. The gallery's effect of maximum interior decoration found at Fontainebleau would be later echoed in Percier and Fontaine's decoration of the platinum cabinet for Charles IV.

In the manuscript, Percier writes that decoration reached an apogee during the sixteenth century, as the three arts of painting, sculpture and architecture "were linked perfectly together,

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[177] Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France*, 71.

[178] Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France*, 72.

[179] Dora and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 1076 (Sept. 1958): 113-90.

concurring in decorating public and private buildings by highlighting one by the other."[180]

Percier's text seeks to pick apart Fontainebleau's structural elements from the decoration. The architect rambles through the interconnected elements, describing "happy combinations of compartments proper to receiving the richest ornaments, the squares of the walls were covered in paintings surrounded by stucco, serving to frame and divide them; this decoration rested upon a wainscot raised to a height convenient for viewing and good for paintings large chimneys decorated with statues, columns, paintings, and enamel ended these places and stamped them with a truly monumental aspect."[181] For Percier, the close relationship between structural and decorative elements — from the masonry and carpentry work to the sculpted stucco figures framing the paintings and down to the intricate parquet floors — all contributed to a decorative effect. In an especially telling passage, Percier writes that during the sixteenth century, paintings were not mobile "like the paintings suspended in the cabinet of an amateur," but were instead fresco paintings, "and by consequence, adherent to the construction. This manner of decorating the walls on the interior as well as exterior was a sort of tradition of the Ancients which the Italians could be considered as the continuators."[182] This view of decoration as closely adhering to the walls — the construction of the building itself — would constitute a central part of Percier and Fontaine's technique of decorating during the Directory period. And as we shall see, very few of the interior designs featured in the *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, would allow for paintings to be contemplated in isolation, as if they were "suspended in the cabinet of an amateur." Instead, painting would have to be viewed as part of a larger decorative ensemble,

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[180] Charles Percier, "Notes detaches sur la decoration des salles du chateau de Fontainebleau," Ms 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.

[181] Ibid.

where structural elements such as cornices and friezes would be just as prominent to the eye as painted wall decorations and the sculpted ornaments on chimneypieces.

It is evident from Percier's short essay on the ballroom at Fontainebleau that his own understanding of interior decorations depended upon the visual study of a wide range of historical sources. Importantly, neither he nor Fontaine were antiquarians, and Percier's writing was above all rooted in the desire to understand a different historical period and its modus operandi, and to apply that knowledge in the creation of his own designs. Even once his work for the revolutionary committee on monuments was over, Percier returned again and again to Fontainebleau. The only two sketches in the album are dated to 6 Brumaire l'an 9, or 1801. However, the lengthy note included in the album suggests that Percier made several visits to the chateau between 1793 and 1810, when a large portion of Fontainebleau was destroyed.[183] By the time of his final visit, much of the ballroom would have to be destroyed and altered, in order to create new living quarters for the emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte.

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[182] Charles Percier, Ms 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.
[183] Charles Percier, Ms 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.

Chapter 2
Ornament after the Orders

In this chapter, I undertake a close examination of the *Recueil de décorations intérieures* (1801-12), Percier and Fontaine's most important publication, in order to examine how the architects developed a theory of architecture that depended upon new modes of representing the interior. A primary aim of this chapter is to read the *Recueil* within the historical and cultural context of post-revolutionary architecture. While scholars have tended to place the *Recueil* within the framework of stylistic transformations in interior decoration and changing patterns in taste,[184] few have explored the extent to which Percier and Fontaine's book came to represent a new social order, precisely at the same moment that the architects sought to conceptualize the interior as the primary site of a post-Vitruvian architectural discourse.

The chapter begins by considering the *Recueil's* place within Percier and Fontaine's work as authors. It will continue the discussion from the previous chapter of how Percier and Fontaine adapted to an architecture market transformed by the political circumstances of the French Revolution. While they participated in the official committees of the revolution, they also began publishing books that would ultimately serve as the basis of their fame. This chapter considers why the *Recueil* proved to be their most influential publication. The *Recueil* will be compared with earlier architecture books in order to highlight how Percier and Fontaine's publication drew attention to the interior as a site for reinventing architectural notions of *caractère*. The work of Germain Boffrand and the theory of character that he developed in his *Livre d'architecture* (1745) constitute critical points of contrast, since the architect based the term on a humanist

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[184] The classic sources are Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor : the Domestic Interior, 1620-1920* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1984) and Mario Praz, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration : from Pompeii to Art Nouveau* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982).

literary tradition that had been transformed by Enlightenment thought. Harnessing the notion of architectural decoration to the social order of the ancien régime, Boffrand's theory would later be transformed by his students, in particular Le Camus de Mézières, who brought a philosophy of the senses to bear upon the spaces of the interior.

In the second part of the chapter, I move into an analysis of the text and images of the *Recueil*, in order to understand the publication's place within transformations in the visual and textual system of architectural representation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. I compare Percier and Fontaine's publication to relevant decoration and architecture books of the period. Next, I examine why the technique of outline engraving held particular significance in the book's patterns of reception, circa 1800. The *Recueil*'s images brought a neoclassical vision founded upon the clarity of outlines to the interior. Although Percier and Fontaine initially adopted outline engraving for economic reasons, their contemporaries, such as the architect Charles-Pierre-Joseph Normand and the English connoisseur Thomas Hope, enthusiastically embraced the aesthetic qualities of the reproductive technique. I offer an alternative perspective to the traditional reading of the *Recueil* as adhering strictly to a vocabulary based in classical antiquity by tracking the subtle visual evolution that takes place in the final plates of the publication. Finally, I ask how the aesthetic of outline engraving, which had become associated with the moral freedom of antiquity, morphed into the ornamental grammar of the Napoleonic empire.

The *Recueil* is commonly positioned as having created the Empire style, an extravagant form of interior decoration closely associated with the architects' most famous patron, Napoleon

Bonaparte.[185] Issued in installments from 1801 to 1812, the book is comprised of 72 plates of

projects for decors and decorative objects designed by Percier and Fontaine, explanatory texts

and a preliminary discourse. The *Recueil* has largely been studied in the isolated context of

Empire period decorative arts and furniture as a reflection of transformations in taste or as the

final stylistic mutation in Neoclassicism.[186] The extensive archival scholarship of Hans

Ottomeyer showed that the book predated Napoleon's ascendancy to the imperial throne in 1804.

More recently, the traveling exhibition on Empire period furniture organized by the Musée des

arts décoratifs in 2007 revealed the central role played by the *Recueil* in positioning the

decorative arts as an integral part of the byzantine rituals of the new empire.[187] The quotidian

became invested with new significance for a French society recovering from the political

excesses of the Revolution. Yet the question of what happened to architecture — French

royalty's favored and most visible symbol of power--remained unasked in the exhibition.

The broader claim that I make in this chapter is that the *Recueil* must be reread as a

complex document indicating a fundamental shift in architectural discourse, marked above all by

the emergence of the interior. This is not to say that interiors were not the subject of

architectural interest before 1800. However, I argue that the *Recueil* introduced the interior as a

primary site for the disciplinary articulation of architecture. Even as Jean-Nicolas-Louis

Durand's theory sought to codify and divide architecture into a rational space of plan, section

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[185] On the origins of the designation "Empire style," see Hans Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers (1782-1800): zu den Anfängen des Historismus in Frankreich* (Munich: Gräbner, 1981), 241-249. Also, Jean-Pierre Samoyault, *Mobilier Francais Consulat Et Empire* (Paris: Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2008).

[186] Mario Praz, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration: from Pompeii to Art Nouveau* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982) and Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor: the Domestic Interior, 1620-1920* (New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Viking, 1984).

[187] Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, Anne Dion-Tenenbaum, Sabrina Abron, etc., *L'aigle et le papillon : Symboles des pouvoirs sous Napoléon, 1800-1815* (Paris; New York:American Federation of the Arts: Musée des Arts Décoratifs; Abrams, 2007).

and elevation, there was another parallel vision of architecture migrating to the interior. Percier and Fontaine's book shows that the site was a critical battleground between architects and craftsmen, and between the high aesthetic principles that Percier and Fontaine sought to defend and the mercurial power of fashion. In Percier and Fontaine's conception, the architect had to discipline the other fine arts and craftsmen producing the furnishings, at the same time that he had to translate the identity of the inhabitant into a legible site. With their decision to include a preliminary discourse in 1812, Percier and Fontaine turned the book and its images into a theory of the interior, which placed a discourse of decoration at the center of a modern architecture.

The basis of Percier and Fontaine's theory of interior decoration lies principally in the image of the architecture propagated in the plates of the *Recueil*. Instead of identifying each of the plates' patrons and locations, a primary aim of this chapter is to disengage the decoration book from the attempts to read it as a document of archival evidence, used solely to reconstruct no longer extant interiors, in a positivist archaeology seeking to get at "how people really lived back then." For the ambiguous visual representations in the *Recueil* suggest that this was not simply a collection of completed interiors; there is a prescriptive as well as descriptive quality that lends the book an open-endedness, which, I will argue, is what explains its ability to be read simultaneously as a book representing Percier and Fontaine's body of work , a collection of hypothetical projects, and a constitutive element of Napoleonic ideology.

The ambiguous representational mode that the images of the *Recueil* occupy — between architectural projection and archival document—is demonstrated in plate 60 of the *Recueil*, showing the design for a boudoir. [Figure 2.1] The plate shows what appears to be a mirror reflecting a statue of Ceres standing in a garden, surrounded by flowers and plants.[188] A frame

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[188] The identification of the sculpture as Ceres was suggested to me by Kenneth Lapatain. The statue has been restored slightly differently in the *Recueil*'s plate. The statue was originally in the collection of the Vatican, and was

containing an ornate border of rinceaux and arabesques includes medallions with classical busts in profile. The vertical portions of the frame terminate with sphinxes and what appear to be marble plinths, although it is unclear from the image whether the bases have been painted or are forms of marble revetment. Set below the sculpture is a bookcase or square niches containing a clock in the center, with leather bound books picturesquely tipping over to the left of the clock, and a diminutive inkstand with a quill sitting in a pot to the right. A delicate canapé, or daybed, has been placed against the wall below the clock. Finely rendered lines suggest the rustling effect of the daybed's taffeta cloth, pleated with an embroidered border. The daybed shown in plate 60 would have been colored in a lilac and orange combination, a colorful effect that would have covered all of the matching furniture and wall hangings of what has been identified as a small boudoir constructed for Madame Moreau.

In the *Recueil*, decoration becomes a generative source for architectural theory, particularly in the hands of Percier. As Jean-Pierre Samoyault has indicated, Percier and Fontaine's "boudoir pour Mme. M. exécuté à Paris" (also the subject of plate 19 of the *Recueil*), can be traced to the architects' important commission for the redecoration of the Parisian residence of General Moreau at Rue d'Anjou, from around 1801-1802. According to Samoyault, the general's mother-in-law, Madame Hulot had commissioned the architects to completely redecorate the hotel, following General Moreau's marriage to her daughter in 1801.[189] Yet Percier and Fontaine's images of General Moreau's decor included in the *Recueil* offer only a partial view of their extensive work for the disgraced and subsequently exiled general. The

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later displayed at the Salle de Laocoon at the Musée Napoléon. See for example Jean-Luc Martinez, ed., *Antiques du Musée Napoléon: Édition illustrée et commentée des volumes V et VI de l'inventaire du Louvre de 1810* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004).

[189] Jean-Pierre Samoyault and Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Mobilier Du Général Moreau : Un Ameublement à la mode en 1802 : Musée national du château de Fontainebleau, 16 Juin-14 Septembre 1992* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), 18.

architects' work on the hotel represented their last private commission before they devoted their

careers to cultivating Napoleon's official style. In fact, Fontaine described how jealously

Napoleon regarded General Moreau's renovations. In a distant echo of Fouquet and Louis XIV,

Napoleon had Moreau exiled, ultimately absorbing his furnishings into the imperial *mobilier*

national.

More than serving as evidence of the taste for decoration circa 1800, plate 60 poses a

visual conundrum in the representation of the interior. The question is, how do we in fact read

this image? As Samoyault has indicated, numerous inconsistencies exist between an imagined

reconstruction of the now destroyed Hôtel Moreau[190] and Percier and Fontaine's image. The

boudoir would have been a small room on the *premier étage* of the hotel, with a ceiling of a

reduced height because of the location of the general's *cabinet de toilette,* on the mezzanine level

above. Percier and Fontaine's image is an implausible — if not impossible — description of

their architectural commission for the general. According to Samoyault, two opposing sides of

the room would have featured windows with a mirror panel between, and on the other side, a

niche decorated with a panel of silvered mirror, framed by two small glazed doors. The other

facing walls would have had a chimney placed between two false doors covered in mirrors, and a

wall with two double-doors and a false door, all covered in mirrors. How would it be possible to

see a sculpture in the outdoor garden if, in fact, the boudoir was located on the second story of

the building? One final aspect of the plate suggests that the image was not merely a record of the

architects' commissions. The legs of the daybed in fact show two different designs. On the left,

the leg is comprised of a vase shape and terminates in a lion's foot; on the right, the two volutes

are much more pronounced. The difference in the tassels at the very bottom of the plate

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[190] The hotel was demolished during the Second Empire, in order to make room for the Boulevard Malesherbes. Samoyault, *Le Mobilier Du Général Moreau*, 18.

indicates that these variations cannot be ascribed to a mistake made by the engraver. Instead, the plate presents two alternative designs, suggesting that the image is not merely a simple artifact that can be used in order to reconstruct destroyed buildings.

This image, like the others in the *Recueil* offers two potentialities, two possibilities in the direction of reading Percier and Fontaine's interior designs. On the one hand, the book is, as the architects acknowledge in the preliminary discourse, a record of projects that "by the importance of their destination, or the rank of those who commissioned them, can be viewed as properly attesting to the manner of seeing, composing and decorating, of the present period."[191] On the other hand, in the pages of the *Recueil*, the architectural image makes a radical departure from mere pattern books or *recueils d'ornement*. For the interior, as represented by Percier and Fontaine, is no longer determined by the coordinated strictures of facade, plan or elevation. It becomes a white cube in which fantasies of total control — architectural, aesthetic and political — can take hold.

Authoring the *Recueil*

The *Recueil de décorations intérieures* formed the unexpected success of Percier and Fontaine's careers, eclipsing their prolific work as teachers and administrators and their other publications. In 1801, when an argument with Josephine over the design of the garden at Malmaison threatened to terminate their professional relationship with Napoleon (a subject that will be discussed in Chapter 3), Fontaine comforted himself in knowing that his publications with Percier would suffice to provide them enough financial security. On 20 fructidor Year IX

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[191] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*..(Paris: L'Aventurine, 1997 [reprint]), 10.

(September 7, 1801), Fontaine wrote in his journal that their book on the *Maisons de plaisance de Rome*, the "decoration book," and a less costly publication on the palaces and houses of Rome (*Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome*) "appear to be resources [enough] for securing our existence and even our reputation."[192] Fontaine's comments show how the architects' publications were considered essential forms of livelihood in an unstable architectural market. They were also important forms of publicity for architects who were subject to the changing tastes of the public.

The reasons for the success of the *Recueil de décorations intérieures* lie partly in the fact that it was published at a moment when the preciously bound luxury architectural treatise was being replaced by more economic, accessible and mobile forms of the architectural book.[193] As Jean-Philippe Garric has shown, the expensive, large format books that had defined the architectural publishing market in the eighteenth-century, such as Le Roy's book on Greece, depended upon the sponsorship of wealthy patrons. In contrast, architects publishing during the revolution and at the beginning of the nineteenth century often took charge of engraving, editing and financing their own publications.

In creating a *recueil*, or collection-format book, Percier and Fontaine, like other architects, took advantage of the new trend for publishing books on a subscription basis, and on issuing their books in cheaper cahier formats, or installments. Percier and Fontaine's designs for furniture, decorative objects and interiors were printed in folio format, and initially sold in *cahiers,* or booklet installments of 6 plates, issued in blue paper wrappers. [Figure 2.2] The

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[192] Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Journal 1799-1853* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1987) Tome. 1, 32.

[193] Jean-Philippe Garric, *Recueils d'Italie : Les modèles italiens dans les livres d'architecture français* (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 2004) and Beatrice Bouvier, *L'édition d'architecture à Paris au XIXe siècle : Les maisons Bance et Morel et la presse architecturale.* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2004).

Recueil could be purchased in different versions, with a cahier printed on *papier de France* costing 4 francs, and cahiers printed on *papier d'Hollande* for 9 francs. For the more costly sum of 30 francs, customers could purchase a cahier with colored images painted with wash and watercolor. However, the overall cost of the *Recueil* paled in comparison to the large format of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand's *Recueil et parallèle* (1800), which sold at the print seller Joubert for 180 francs.[194]

Issuing the *Recueil* in installments gave the book an anticipatory quality, for readers had to wait in order to receive each successive cahier. Hans Ottomeyer writes that most copies of Percier and Fontaine's book contain both title pages with the year 1801 (An IX) and the later title page marked 1812, which completed the plates. A rare example of the *Recueil* held at the Getty allows us to envision how the plates would have been issued not as a single book, but in installments over a period of 11 years.[195] Each cahier or installment of six plates printed on the cheaper papier de France option, is contained in a blue paper wrapper, stamped with the title page and the "livraison" or installment number written in ink. Often discarded, these original blue paper wrappers show how the *Recueil* arrived in the hands of readers as a series of plates lacking both the explanatory text and the preliminary discourse.[196] A blue paper wrapper marked as the "12e et dernier livraison" contains the *discours préliminaire* and the descriptive index.

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[194] Anne Dion-Tenenbaum, "Les recueils d'ornements," in *L'aigle et le papillon: Symboles des pouvoirs sous Napoléon, 1800-1815* (Paris; New York :American Federation of the Arts: Musée des Arts Décoratifs; Abrams, 2007), 67.

[195] ID 83-B 3068-2, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, Los Angeles, Ca. The Getty has a total of eight copies of the *Recueil* from the 1801-12 first edition, a copy of the second edition printed by Didot l'aîné in 1827, and an 1843 reprint by the Venetian architect Giuseppe Borsato. The Getty's Percier and Fontaine collection came from the George De Belder and Giovanni de Muzio collections. De Belder was an avid collector of Percier and Fontaine's work. See Bernard Quaritch, *The Georges De Belder Collection of Neo-classicism* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1984). I thank Marcia Reed for the reference.

[196] The blue paper itself would often be torn and reused for sketching, as is suggested by the scrapbook connected to Percier and Fontaine's workshop at the Metropolitan. Scrapbook of sketches, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, 1963, Accession Number 63.535, Drawings and Prints Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

[Figure 2.3] Whereas in subsequent editions, the preliminary discourse is placed at the

beginning of the book and the explanatory text at the end, this copy places both at the beginning.

Another copy of the *Recueil* at the Getty is printed on the more expensive papier d'Hollande[197].

The beautiful, sharp registration on the heavier weight paper makes it clear why Charles Landon

described the *Recueil*'s engravings as "light and spiritual."[198] The second edition of the *Recueil*

from 1827 shows few differences from the earlier edition completed in 1812.

The format of the *Recueil* allowed for a rapid dissemination of their designs to a wide

variety of readers. As the original title page and the lengthy title[199] indicates, [Figure 2.4]

Percier and Fontaine's book was available at paper sellers, bookstores, print shops and

marchands de nouveautés, the purveyors of luxury goods who had replaced the celebrated

marchands merciers of the eighteenth-century.[200] The title page also indicates that the

decoration book was also deposited at the newly formed *Bibliothèque nationale*, indicating its

preservation for erudite audiences. There has been some confusion over the publication history

of the *Recueil*, with earlier authors citing 1806 as its initial publication date, because it had been

for long been closely associated with the Empire style, rather than earlier periods.[201] In the

earliest publication notice for the *Recueil* in 1801, the writer Charles Landon mentioned that two

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[197] 83-B3068-4, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, Los Angeles, Ca.

[198] Charles Landon, *Nouvelles des arts, peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1802), Tome II, 216.

[199] The full title of Percier and Fontaine's publication is *Recueil de décorations intérieures comprenant tout ce qui a rapport a l'ameublement comme vases, trépieds, candelabres, cassolettes, lusters, girandoles, lampes,chandeliers, cheminées, feux, poêles, pendules, tables, secretaries, lits, canapés, fauteuils, chaises, tabourets, miroirs,ecrans &, &,&.*

[200] Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets: The Marchands Merciers of Eighteenth-century Paris* (Malibu, Calif: Victoria and Albert Museum in association with the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996).

[201] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 195.

installments had already appeared.[202] By 1805, 54 plates had been issued. This suggests that roughly three-quarters of the projects predate the beginning of the Empire period in 1804.[203] There was thus no "original edition" published in 1801. Instead, the book was published over a span of time, completed only with the final installment in 1812. It is likely that the same year, the publishing firm Didot l'ainé bundled the plates with the text and sold it as a complete edition.[204]

Early installments of the Recueil were initially directed toward specialists responsible for executing interior decorations. This is suggested in Landon's notice for the Recueil, when he announces that "Not only artists and decorators, but also skilled workers in all areas related to interior decoration had desired the publication of such a collection."[205] Cheaper copies of the book might serve as useful sources for craftsmen and artisans both in the context of the decorator's workshop and Percier's own atelier. The images found in the Recueil were widely copied in both engraved ornament books and sketched by students. A scrapbook of sketches attributed to Percier and Fontaine's workshop[206] [Figure 2.5] and an atelier album[207] [Figure 2.6] shows how students and apprentices often rehearsed the more refined designs for objects, furnishings and decors found within the Recueil.[208] Plate 41 of the Recueil, featuring Percier and Fontaine's design for the library ceiling of Malmaison was copied in a pencil drawing in an

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[202] Landon lists the successive issuing of the installments: In 1802, the third cahier was issued; in 1803, the fifth and sixth installments were issued; in 1804 the seventh. The last edition of Landon's book in 1805 mentions that the eighth and ninth cahiers had been issued. Ottomeyer, Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers,197.

[203] Ottomeyer, Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers, 195-200.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Landon, Nouvelles des arts, 365.

[206] See footnote 13.

[207] Atelier de Percier, 63 bound drawings, OP 7, Accession Number 2000.2, Percier and Fontaine Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

[208] Metropolitan scrapbook.

album from around 1825, attributed to Jules-Frederic Bouchet, a student of Percier and

Fontaine.[209] [Figure 2.7] The traced drawing shows how architectural students would copy

designs from books and modify them for their own projects. This demonstrates that the *Recueil*

continued to enjoy a widespread influence decades after its initial publication. Costlier copies

printed on more expensive paper and bound in leather could occupy a place on the connoisseur's

shelf. The most expensive colored versions could be offered to wealthy clients, as indicated by

the hand-colored version of *Palais, Maisons* offered to Josephine, held today at Sir John Soane's

Museum in London.

A closer look at another copy of the *Recueil*[210] indicates the original, rather modest

intention of the architects to produce a book of their designs for craftsmen. The inside of the

blue paper wrapper marking the second through sixth installments has been stamped with a

notice, describing the overall trajectory of the publication. [Figure 2.8] The notice states that the

book will only contain "useful furnishings and decorations executed from the designs of C.

Percier and P.F.L. Fontaine." It adds that plans and details will be included, which are

"necessary to the intelligence of objects to be represented," alongside a table of explanations of

each subject containing "abridged explanations of the furnishings and decorations, with

indications of the colors and materials which compose them."[211] The notice further indicates that

the explanations were initially intended to clarify certain aspects of the furniture design: "We

will summarize the means employed in their construction in order to facilitate their [furniture's]

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[209] Jules-Frederic Bouchet Album, ID Number 2598-142, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Ca. Bouchet was a student of Percier's atelier in the late 1810's. The album spans from the 1820s to 1850s, includes designs for books, interiors and buildings, attesting to Bouchet's training as a draftsman under Percier.

[210] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, ID Number 83-B3068 Copy 1, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

[211] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, ID Number 83-B3068 Copy 1, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

usage…and to respond to the demand that most of the subscribers have made," suggesting that

the *Recueil* was initially distributed on a subscription base.[212] Its widespread dissemination is

indicated by the issuing of a second edition published in 1827 during Percier and Fontaine's

lifetime. Furthermore, an 1843 edition of the *Recueil* sanctioned by Fontaine was produced in

Venice. Translated as *Raccolta di decorazi interne*, the Italian edition actually comprised radical

interventions, from the erasure of Napoleon's initials [Figure 2.9] to the supplemental plates

featuring the designs of the Venetian architect Giuseppe Borsato, who had initiated the reprint to

publicize his own designs.

Despite the fact that all of the plates in the *Recueil* are signed by both Percier and

Fontaine — and the known collaboration of several engravers on the project—it is clear that

Percier spearheaded the publication of the decoration book. By 1801, Percier and Fontaine had a

well-established partnership and a clear division of labor that resulted from their divergent

interests. As we have seen in chapter one, Percier had a natural aptitude for decoration and

draftsmanship, whereas Fontaine immersed himself within the economic and social aspects of

the architectural profession. In their first architecture book, *Palais, maisons, et autres édifices*

modernes dessinés à Rome, published in 1798, Fontaine depicted the perspectival views, drawing

from his own penchant for moody, picturesque architectural fantasies as demonstrated in his

episode at the architecture academy.[213] [Figure 2.10] Claude Louis Bernier — the third and

perhaps most practical member of their team—drew the plans and elevations. [Figure 2.11] In

1807, the architects signed a formal agreement that they would share the profits of their

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[212] "Notice. il ne contiendra que des Meubles d'usage et des Decorations executes sur les Dessins de C. Percier et P.F.L. Fontaine. On y joindra les Plans et les details necessaires a l'intelligence des objets qui seront representes, et on donnera, a la fin du 12eme Cahier, une Table explicative de chaque sujet, suivant son N. Cette Table contiendra l'explication en abrege des Meubles et des Decorations, avec l'indication des couleurs et des matieres qui les composent. On rendra compte des moyens employes dans leur construction, pour eu faciliter l'usage a ceux auxquels ils pourraient servir et repondre a la demande que la plupart des Souscripteurs en ont faite."

[213] See Chapter 1.

published work, attesting to the financial importance of their work as authors.[214] However, the

prominent place given to the ornate, refined frontispieces to each installment of the *Palais* by

Percier [Figure 2.12] (and the placement of his name before Fontaine in all of their publications)

attests to the precedence that the architects continued to bestow upon Percier's decorative work.

These decorative compositions provided the thematic overtone to each installment of the Roman

residences and ultimately became the centerpiece of the *Recueil*. As Garric writes, the

ornamental frontispieces gave a particular rhythm to the cahier format of Percier and Fontaine's

books. "Characteristic of the collections [recueils] was the adaptation of the contents to the

successive order of the installments, turning each installment into a finished object itself....The

decision to announce each booklet by a frontispiece as Percier and Fontaine did with *Palais,*

maisons et autres édifices, imposed a rapid rhythm to the work and reserved considerable space

for the ornamental compositions."[215]

Percier's virtuosic drawing techniques applied with equal skill to antique reconstructions

and ornamental compositions gained the architectural duo early recognition (although as we shall

see in the next chapter, it was Fontaine who was able to negotiate their status as Napoleon's

official architects). Even while working under the aegis of his partnership with Fontaine, Percier

pursued independent artistic projects. Chief among them were his celebrated illustrations for the

publisher Didot l'aîné's luxury editions of famous texts from antiquity and French classicism

known as the Louvre editions.[216] Percier designed the vignettes found at the head of each

chapter in Horace's *Opera*, a compendium of the Roman writer's works published in 1799. For

Didot l'aîné, these luxury editions printed in grand folio formats constituted works of art where

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[214] Dion-Tennenbaum, "Recueil d'ornements," 67.

[215] Garric, *Recueils d'Italie*, 110.

[216] Carol Osborne, *Pierre Didot the Elder and French Book Illustration, 1789-1822* (PhD Diss., Stanford University, 1979).

typeface, page setting, illustrations and even the deep tone of ink reached a height of stylistic unity.[217] The extent to which Percier's drawings were prized is indicated by the fact that in the first 100 copies of the book, Didot included unlettered proofs of the compositions drawn by Percier and engraved by Abraham Girardet.[218]

In these intimate, jewel-like vignettes, Percier reimagines the Roman writer in an ancient setting. At the head of the second book of the Odes, Horace is shown between two illusionistic panels. [Figure 2.13] Each side panel contains a female and male herm, surrounded by an elegant band of decoration. In the central scene, the poet is seated wearing a short toga, gazing intently at a burning lamp and a bust of his patron Maecenas, placed on a table. In the image opening the fourth book of the Odes, Horace assumes a more languid pose, draped across an antique daybed [Figure 2.14]. He contemplates a fresco of Venus on the wall and the names of Greek poets who had inspired him. The level of detail in the image is remarkable. The glimmering reflection of veined marble pilaster is captured on the patterned floor. The details of busts and scrolls lining the walls as well as the thoroughly imagined furnishings enliven the text, as if the reader can imagine Horace conversing with Venus herself in order to pen his verse.

Significantly, Percier chose to highlight the poet rather than depict scenes from Horace's work. The architect was most concerned with capturing the historical setting in which the poet lived, rather than merely illustrating the text. More than being illustrations, these vignettes serve as windows or portals into the poetic text that ensues on the page. The decor itself plays a constitutive role in evoking the ancient writer toiling over his verse in search of inspiration. And

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[217] Osborne, *Pierre Didot*, 67.

[218] Osborne, *Pierre Didot,* 199.

despite the fact that it is highly unlikely that Percier knew how to read Latin,[219] his images show

that he was able to channel the poetic nuances of Horace's text into his archaeological scenes.

That Percier gained fame for vignettes, decorative frames and other seemingly marginal

details that might escape our notice today attests to a "period eye" very different from our

own.[220] Horace of course was instrumental in the formulation of a seventeenth-century aesthetic

theory that Erica Harth has called the "Ut Pictura Poesis representational system." Ut pictura

poesis refers to a constantly revisited portion Horace's text *Ars Poetica*, which suggested that

painting is mute poetry, and poetry a speaking picture.[221] Text and images worked in tandem, in

a circuitous process of referencing, with neither visual nor literary reality, or even an outside

referent privileged. Percier's images operate differently from this seventeenth century system of

representation, where allegorical representations and historical facts constituted the same reality.

In Percier's vignettes, antiquity is reconstructed as an actual site, a historical reality in which the

text was originally composed. His vision heralds an archaeological imagination, one that seeks

to bring ancient Rome back to life by imagining as vividly as possible the surroundings of the

ancient writer Horace.[222] The coordinated elements of architectural setting, historical costume,

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[219] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 41. mentions Percier's lack of "humanist" training in latin as something that differentiated him from mentors such as Pierre-Adrien Pâris. "Da Percier ebenso wie Ligorio kein Latein beherrschte, musste er fremde Hilfe in Anspruch nehmen, die ihn im erweiteren Sinne mit dem Vokabular, nicht aber mit der Syntax bekannt machte. Der genaue Anschluss an den Text von Varro ist so zu verstehen, dass der Forderung Le Roys entsprechend gründliche Studien den Ursprung und Prototyp als die verbindlichste Form aufspürten."

[220] The term "period eye" comes from Michael Baxandall, in describing the specific cultural, social and economic conditions that conditioned the way paintings in Renaissance Italy were viewed and produced. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy : a Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[221] Erica Harth, *Ideology and Culture in Seventeenth-century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 24. Harth's interpretation builds, as she admits, on Michel Foucault's influential conception of the Renaissance episteme as comprised of a system of resemblances. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things : an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Routledge Classics. London: Routledge, 2002).

[222] For a brief history of archaeology, see Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997). For an interpretation of the archaeological methodology in the art history of Alois Riegl, see Erika Naginski, "Riegl, archaeology, and the periodization of culture," *Res* 40 (Autumn 2001): 135-152. See also Göran Blix, *From*

and decorative motifs all work to give the ancient past a palpable immediacy, a representational

mode that would be equally deployed in the pages of the *Recueil*.

Percier's attentiveness to drawing in all its aspects — from the initial mode of rendering

to its subsequent layout on the page—had precedents in architects such as Boullée, who

emphasized that the drawing contained the conception and ideational essence of a building.

Percier, however, took this idea one step further. Drawing itself became a means of knowledge

and information that would rival the copious texts that Fontaine was so fond of penning. In an

intimate letter written in 1808 to his student Hippolyte Lebas in Rome, Percier exhorts his

student to carefully record each of the sites, monuments and buildings he visits with comments

and notes on the margins of his drawings. Furthermore, he emphasizes how important the

drawings themselves are for future clients or for the use of painters or even clock makers.[223] He

writes that Le Bas must pay special attention to decorative elements. Nonetheless, Percier

emphasizes that divorced from their architectural context, such decorations would "lose nearly

all of their worth."[224] A truly exceptional aspect of Percier's working method was his view that

the drawing itself was never simply a "working drawing." It was itself a final, finished product.

This tendency to make the drawing a total meaningful entity in its own right is demonstrated in a

study from 1809 [Figure 2.15].[225] The image is comprised of multiple elements pasted together.

It includes the base for a column drawn in pencil and a Pompeiian decorative frame painted in

brown ink surrounding an image of an Egyptian-inspired object. Despite the contrasting

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Paris to Pompeii : French Romanticism and the Cultural Politics of Archaeology (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[223] Charles Percier to Hippolyte Lebas 1 February 1808, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

[224] Charles Percier to Hippolyte Lebas 1 February 1808. "il faut des etudes positives, reservez, pour les decorations leur choses aimables votre gout charmant encore pensez mon cher hipolite que ces memes objets qui nous charme perdroit presque tout leurs prix si elles etoit detache de l'architecture."

[225] Charles Percier, Decorative drawing, RF 30632, Department of graphic arts, Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

materials, motifs and techniques employed in the parts of the study, the different elements have been fused on the sheet as if they were intended to be read together as a compositional whole. It is likely that the subsequent ordering of the image was the work of Percier, considering the ample attention he paid to organizing the format of drawings.

Percier paid attention to the decorative detail as a means of illuminating an entire historical epoch. Furthermore, he positioned decorative compositions as a central part of the "Percier and Fontaine" enterprise. In his role as an educator, Percier emphasized the importance of knowing how to create designs for decorative objects as well as architectural details. Near the end of his life as a trustee of the École gratuite de dessin alongside fellow alumnus and painter François Gérard, Percier encouraged the school to borrow engravings of ornaments, and supplied the students with albums for sketching decorative designs.[226] However, it must be acknowledged that it was Fontaine who sensed the economic opportunities to be gained from publishing his work with Percier. Otherwise, Percier's exceptional talents would have gone unnoticed by the wider public of post-revolutionary France, seeking, in the words of Raoul Rochette, a revolution in their "domestic habits."[227]

The *Caractère* of Decoration

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[226] Pierre Louis Rouillard, "Projets et opinion de M. Percier concernant l'ecole impériale de dessin," AN F21/644, Archives nationales de France, Paris, France. "En 1833 et 1834, Mr. Percier, qui se préoccupait de développer l'arrangement décoratif, engageait l'Ecole à prêter des gravures de ce genre aux Elèves à qui on donnait aussi des albums à remplir de ces croquis. Mr. Percier surveilla l'organisation de concours en composition d'ornement, en arrangement de plantes. M. Percier, accompagné du Baron Gérard, toujours présent aux jugements de ces concours, se faisait présenter les elèves, expliquant le besoin qu'a le sculpteur de connatire la perspective, les éléments d'architecture; de même qu'à l'élève, dessinant l'architecture, la nécessité pour lui de savoir modeler, s'il veut être recherché, comme dessintaeur, par l'industrie."

[227] Desiré-Raoul Rochette, "Charles Percier," *Revue des deux-mondes*, T. 24 (1840), 257.

In order to understand the reconfiguration of the interior effected in Percier and Fontaine's decoration book, it must be situated within a long tradition of ornament and decoration publications. Although not quite as exalted as building treatises, these books nonetheless constituted an important form of knowledge in the architect's repertoire. Architects such as Juste Aurèle Meissonier, whose designs were featured in his eponymous book, *Oeuvre de Juste Aurèle Meissonier,* published from around 1738 to 1748, owed their reputation to ornamental works.[228] In Meissonier's case, the fluid parameters of what is today known as Rococo art allowed for the architect to apply an asymmetric aesthetic of whorls, swirls and crustacean motifs to a myriad of objects, surfaces and spaces, presented in his book [Figure 2.16].

Decoration occupied a primary place of importance within the literary tradition of the architectural treatise. During the Italian Renaissance, a discussion of decoration enabled the architect to loosen the ancient Roman author Vitruvius's yoke of authority in order to engage in a little artistic license. As Alina Payne has shown, Sebastiano Serlio constructed a theory of ornament through his discussion of the orders of architecture in his book, *Regole generale d'architettura sopra le cinque maniere degli edifici...* (1537)[229] [Figure 2.17] Payne argues that for Serlio and others building in the sixteenth century after the rediscovery of antiquity,

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[228] The full title is *Oeuvre de Juste Aurele Meissonnier, peintre, sculpteur, architecte &c., dessinateur de la chambre et cabinet du Roy. Premiere partie / executé sous la conduitte de l'auteur.* The book, divided into seventy-four plates was published and engraved by Gabriel Huquier. As the title indicates, it is likely that the later plates were published principally through the initiative of Huquier. See Peter Fuhring, *Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier : Un génie du rococo, 1695-1750.* Archives d'arts décoratifs (Turin: U. Allemandi, 1999).

[229] Alina Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Italian Renaissance : Architectural Invention, Ornament, and Literary Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). As Payne notes, it took a long time before the entirety of Serlio's treatise was published. See page 113. Payne has more recently turned to the later history of ornament as a way of underscoring the complex origins of Modernism rooted in archaeology, anthropology and other disciplines; unfortunately, her book was published too late for me to consult it. See Alina Payne, *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012).

ornament constituted the principle means through which architects could demonstrate their

"architectural virtuosity, fantasia, and igegno."[230]

The building culture of eighteenth-century France had already been moving out of the

orbit of Vitruvius and into the realm of the Enlightenment theories of the senses. In the

seventeenth century, architects sought to codify a unified architectural theory that was backed by

the *Académie royale d'architecture*, an institutional body that emerged from Louis XIV's

absolutist policies.[231] Like the architects of the Italian Renaissance, French theorists rooted their

texts in the humanist interpretation of ancient texts, principally Vitruvius. By contrast, the turn

to the senses during the middle part of the eighteenth century marked a shift away from the

exegetical tradition of architecture, which sought to codify architectural theory through a set of

rules, and towards the production of sensual effects. The writings of influential philosophers

such as Étienne Bonnot de Condillac and Jean-Jacques Rousseau privileged the senses as the

primary form of knowledge. Pleasure too, as an effect produced from the senses' engagement

with nature and other stimuli, also constituted an important part of Enlightenment epistemology

and its ultimate quest for self-knowledge.[232] In this context, decoration was considered the part

of architecture that was best able to activate the senses.[233]

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[230] Alina Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Renaissance*, 116.

[231] Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns : the Architects of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983). Also June Hargrove, ed, *The French Academy : Classicism and Its Antagonists* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

[232] See for example, Alyson Liss,. *The Rhetoric of Architecture and the Language of Pleasure : The Maison de Plaisance in Eighteenth-century France* (M.Arch thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006). For eroticism and its relationship to the Enlightenment, see Michel Feher, ed. *The Libertine Reader: Eroticism and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France* (Zone Books, 1997), Introduction.

[233] In contrast to the humanist milieu of Italy in the sixteenth century, the term *décoration*, rather than *ornement*, came to carry the significance of social decorum by the eighteenth century. *Décoration* implied a complete system of coordinated elements as well as literary connotations rooted in ancient oration. In contrast, *ornement* was associated with the physical applied ornaments that were the speciality of skilled but nonetheless uneducated craftsmen and manual laborers. Quatremère de Quincy writes definitively in his entry on decoration in the Encyclopédie méthodique: "J'ai dit que le second moyen d'architecture, pour plaire, étoit l'art des ornemens. Je le distingue de l'art de l'ornement. Celui-ci consiste davantage dans l'exécution des détails de la décoration (voyez

In Giovanni Batista Piranesi's 1769 publication, *Diverse maniere d'adornare I cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi*, [Figure] the architect presented his decorations and ornaments in order to demonstrate how ancient Egyptian and Etruscan motifs could be adapted to modern designs. In the introduction, Piranesi writes that his elaborate designs for chimneypieces and other decorative objects were meant to serve as a corrective for even the best architects who faltered when it came to the interior. "Who for instance is more noble than Palladio, when the question is concerning works of magnificence? Yet this great man is not equally happy in the internal ornaments of houses, which either shew a poverty of ideas, or a want of knowledge."[234] In other words, for Piranesi, the simple, measured compositions that Palladio was able to achieve on the facades and in the plans of his buildings did not necessarily correspond to the artful arrangement of interiors. These two aspects of architectural design thus often required different sets of skills.

In France, interior decoration gained prominence in the architectural theory of Jacques-François Blondel, whose writings frequently discussed the modern art of arranging and distributing the interior rooms of buildings. Blondel's conception of architecture privileged notions of pleasure and comfort, adapting spaces to fit the needs and conveniences of the modern client. For Blondel, a central theorist of ancien regime architecture, decoration was the most interesting part of architecture because it provoked visual pleasure, a key element of the imitative arts. In his entry on decoration in Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, Blondel writes that "decoration is the most interesting, but least useful part of architecture in terms of utility or

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Ornement). L'autre est l'art de les combiner, de les faire entrer dans le système général, dans l'ensemble & dans l'ordre d'idées qui conviennent à un édifice. C'est proprement la décoration." "Décoration," in Quatremère de Quincy, *Architecture ou Encyclopédie Méthodique* (Paris: Chez Panckoucke, 1801), Tome II.

[234] Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi : desunte dall'architettura egizia, etrusca, e greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell'architettura egizia, e toscana* (Rome: Generoso Salomoni, 1769), 3.

solidity." On the exterior, decoration serves as a marker of distinction, defining the character of

buildings designed for magnificence, such as sacred buildings, palaces and other noble buildings.

In his entry, Blondel pays particular attention to the decoration of the interior. Naming Germain

Boffrand's Hotel de Soubise [Figure 2.19] as exemplary of modern France's achievements in

architecture, Blondel revels in the description of so many coordinated elements aimed at creating

sites of pleasure and seduction. "One finds in these apartments the richness of materials, the

magnificence of furnishings, sculpture, painting, bronzes, mirrors, distributed with such taste,

choice and intelligence that it appears that these palaces are so many enchanted places, built by

opulence to house the graces and sensual pleasures."[235]

An examination of Boffrand's book on architecture, published in 1745, demonstrates the

contrast between Percier and Fontaine's *Recueil* and earlier discussions of interior decoration.

Boffrand's work at the Hôtel de Soubise in 1735 marked an exceptional moment of innovation in

interior decoration, where the architect effected a seamless transition from ceiling moldings to

wall, erasing any trace of structural elements in the interior.[236] His work has been tied to the

creation of new, more informal and more comfortable types of planning for the hôtels being built

by the urban elite of Paris in the early eighteenth century.[237] Boffrand elevated the language of

architectural decoration through his *Livre d'architecture* (1745) a text written both in Latin and

French. He firmly situates it within what has been recognized as a new theory of *caractère*.[238]

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[235] "Décoration," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2011 Edition), Robert Morrissey (ed), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

[236] Caroline Van Eck, "Introduction," in Germain Boffrand, *Book of Architecture : Containing the General Principles of the Art and the Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Some of the Edifices Built in France and in Foreign Countries*, David Britt, trans. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2002), XIII.

[237] Michael Dennis, *Court & Garden : from the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).

[238] Hanno Walter Kruft *A History of Architectural Theory : from Vitruvius to the Present* (London; New York: Zwemmer; Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 148-9.

Instead of basing his book solely on an explication of the orders, Boffrand developed his

architectural theory based directly on classical rhetoric and Horace's *Ars Poetica* (a work that I

discussed in relation to the *ut pictura poesis* system) in order to argue that architecture was a

form of poetic expression. "Through its composition, a building expresses, as if on the stage,

that the scene is pastoral or tragic; that this is a temple or a palace, a public building destined for

a particular purpose or a private house. By their planning, their structure and their decoration, all

such buildings must proclaim their purpose to the beholder."[239] Boffrand argues that it is

important for the architect to build based upon the master of the house and his needs. The master

> sets the tone, as it were, for the architect whose task it is to design
> it in accordance with his client's rank and dignity; he defines its
> parts in accordance with his own needs; he regulates the
> proportions and connections between them, so that all unite to
> form the whole.....If the master's character is modest and sublime,
> his house will be distinguished by more elegant proportions than
> by rich materials. If the master's character is wayward and
> eccentric, his house will be full of disparities and parts of
> agreement. In short, judge the character of the master for whom
> the house was built by the way in which it is planned, decorated
> and furnished.[240]

Scholars have tended to read Boffrand's notion of character as an early psychologization of

architecture, connected to the history painter Charles LeBrun's idea of conveying emotions in a

painting through a set repertoire of facial expressions. Some have even viewed Boffrand's

writings as a precursor to the theory of character developed by the Swiss physiognomist Johann

Caspar Lavater's, who argued that particular facial expressions corresponded to different

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[239] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 10.

[240] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 6.

personalities.[241] However, as Caroline van Eck has contended, Boffrand's notion of *caractère* was closely modeled upon principles of rhetoric and the idea that there were different genres fitting different styles of oratorical delivery. The essential idea is that the orator must adopt a different mode of expression in order to persuade and move one's audience. The difference between Boffrand's usage of rhetoric and literary notions employed by earlier architectural theorists is that in Boffrand's theory, the orders constituted an ancillary element rather than serving as architecture's principal "bearers of meaning."[242] In short, the use of *caractère* as an overarching concept meant that architectural elements other than the system of the orders could function as means of visual expression and communication. As van Eck points out, in Boffrand's notion of *caractère*, he applies "the rhetorical view of art as persuasive communication, together with all its stylistic and interpretive strategies, while keeping intact, as we shall see, the specific character of architecture as a visual and spatial art."[243]

It is taste above all that constitutes the most important part of architectural knowledge, according to Boffrand. The author writes that most men, whether educated or not, can tell the difference between something that is bad and mediocre and can even distinguish between something that is mediocre and good. However, "between the mediocre, the good and the excellent there are many degrees: a man's taste is to be measured by the degrees by which he rises from the good towards the excellent."[244] In the case of architecture, good taste comprises the principles, which establish beautiful proportions, fitness, commodity, safety, health and good

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[241] For the later significance between facial typologies and the connection to Adolf Loos' notions of crime and ornament, see Jimena Canales and Andrew Herscher, "Criminal Skins: Tattoos and Modern Architecture in the Work of Adolf Loos," *Architectural History* 48 (2005): 235-256.

[242] John Onians, *Bearers of Meaning : the Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[243] Van Eck, "Introduction," XXI.

[244] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 7.

sense. Boffrand's usage of bon goût draws from the Latin expression *facultas judicandi eximia*, which, as Van Eck notes, is perhaps better understood as a form of judgment. However, Boffrand's usage of the term *exquisitissimus sapor* also introduces, as David Britt notes, a very concrete and sensual element to this form of judgment.[245] For the usage of *sapor* simultaneously suggests a notion of excellent judgment and evokes the sense of taste linked to the delights of eating.

Boffrand's discussion of the power of fashion to affect the good taste of architects is a critical theme that we will encounter in the preliminary discourse of Percier and Fontaine. Boffrand makes a powerful connection between ornament and fashion, writing that "fashion has taken pleasure in inflicting torture on all the individual parts of a building," overrunning the good principles of architecture in the form of ornament. Criticizing the taste for strapwork, scrollwork and the hallmarks of what we would today call French classicism found at Fontainebleau, Boffrand writes that these ornate forms of decoration crossed over into a territory that they did not belong to. His comments can perhaps also be read as a critique of the Rococo:

> These ornaments have crossed over from interior decoration and woodwork — where intricate craftsmanship may well have its place — into exteriors and stonework, where the craftsmanship must be stouter and more masculine....Fashion has varied the form and outline of every part of a building, and introduced a welter of lines, curved and straight, with no thought of where they might be appropriate, and with no understanding that in architecture such lines are like the notes in music, which on their different strings express joy and sadness, love and hate, grace and terror.... This aberration springs from incomprehension of the properties of the lines concerned, from inattention to the effects they produce when seen, and from a misguided application of principles that are an affront to perfection and to good taste alike.[246]

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[245] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 98, Note 2. For more recent speculations on architecture and the process of ingestion, see Jamie Horwitz and Paulette Singley, *Eating Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

[246] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 6.

For Boffrand, the proliferation of ornament is the avatar of fashion, accruing to a variety of surfaces regardless of their proper place or suitability for a particular architectural site. Fashion is not the negative influence of society, but rather the untrained eye of the woodworker, stonemason and other craftsmen whose uneducated work lacks understanding of the subtle proportions and harmonies of architecture. The interior becomes unmoored from architectural notions of decorum, colonizing the principled order of the building's exterior. In his text, Boffrand also complains that people tended to spend more money on decorating their apartments, rather than decorating the outside of their buildings, which would contribute to the overall appearance of Paris as a whole. As he himself noted, the intense interest that Parisians had for interior decoration "lead to a neglect of the exterior decoration, not only of private houses, but even of those palaces and public buildings that must properly be distinguished from the houses of merchants and artisans."[247] His subsequent description of the different aspects of interior decoration and furnishing is prosaic enough; it is comprised of ceilings and moldings, wall hangings and chimneypieces, mirrors and furnishings. But set within the larger humanist agenda of his book, decoration participates in a conception of architecture based on the art of poetry.

Boffrand emphasized the expressive and theatrical aspects of architecture, arguing that a profile itself would be enough to change the tenor of a building. This understanding is what the generation of architects succeeding Boffrand chose to adopt and subsequently adapt in their understanding of the notion of *caractère*, particularly when applied to the internal distribution of buildings. Perhaps even more so than Blondel, it was Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières who merged Boffrand's rhetorical reading of the interior with eighteenth-century sensationalist

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[247] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 16.

philosophy in his book, *On the Genius of Architecture, or the Analogy of that Art with Our Sensations* (1780).[248]

For Le Camus de Mézières , architecture is as much an art form as painting, and must above all offer visual pleasure. Evoking Boffrand, the author writes that the "expression, the imprint of character, is decisive; let delicacy hold the scales, taste try the weight, and good sense determine."[249] Although Le Camus emphasizes the importance of the orders in his book, he devotes a large portion of his text to treating the interior and its distribution and decoration.

Le Camus celebrates the generative power of luxury, in contrast to Boffrand and other architects who condemned the vices of luxury and fashion, which had the potential to overpower the sound judgment of the architect. He notes that ancient architecture offers little in the way of interior distribution or decoration, since it mostly emphasized exterior parts. One has to turn to present-day France in order to understand new inventions in the interior. The luxury of the interior is what makes France modern. In an exuberant passage, Le Camus describes the way in which his compatriots transformed pleasure into an entire industry of innovation:

> The Frenchman alone, spurred by a love of pleasure, has refined
> upon the comforts of life. Nourished by ambition, inspired by
> magnificence, he has laid his tribute on the altars of luxury.
> Because he is industrious, he turns everything to use. A trifle
> occupies and distracts him, and before long he has endowed it with
> importance; he has made it useful; fashion then takes a hand, and
> what was formerly only useful becomes a necessity. He is not
> seduced by outward size; he knows better how to reconcile his
> interests and pursue his goal. He likes to concentrate his
> possessions, but he has no desire to confuse their separate uses. If

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[248] Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture, or, The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations*, David Britt, trans.(Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992).

[249] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 89.

the rooms appear numerous, this is for the sake of good order and
the tone of grandeur.[250]

Combining the ideas of Claude-Henri Watelet on the picturesque garden and Boffrand's theory

of character, Le Camus' text conjures interior spaces occupied by reactive bodies sensitive to the

slightest differences in color, shape or arrangement. In his text, as one progresses through a

series of interior spaces, architectural knowledge is filtered and accumulated through the visual,

tactile and aural senses. He suggests positioning the boudoir to face a garden, so that the songs

of birds and the trickling music of fountains may be heard as the intertwined scents of jasmine

and honeysuckle waft through an open window. Colors must be carefully chosen for the wall

hangings of the bedroom. Too bold a color may stir one from slumber. Too many mirrors create

an air of melancholy. The right cornice and the correct color choice for wall hangings will

prevent the inhabitant from falling into the grips of ennui.

Despite the myriad of sensorial experiences conjured in the *Genius of Architecture*, sight

dominates the artful distribution of the interior. This is clear in his use of the language of the

theater, referring to specific elements of the stage such as the proscenium arch, the structure

framing the players on the stage and hypothetically separating the spectator from the spectacle

being performed.[251] Describing how the antechambers preceding a salon must be carefully

orchestrated to introduce the decoration of the principle room, he writes that in the antechamber,

"one must become aware of the sensations to be expected in the rooms that follow; [the

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[250] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 104.

[251] The theater was at the center of conceptions of public space. See for example Louise Pelletier, *Architecture in Words : Theatre, Language and the Sensuous Space of Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2006).

antechamber] is, so to speak, a proscenium, and the utmost care must be lavished upon it to announce the characters of the performers in the play."[252]

The role of vision in Le Camus's text also comes into focus when he writes that the architect must consider the interior in terms of its visual representation when designing. He signals in particular that while the *caractère* of the private *appartements* are devoted to the comfort and pleasures of the master or mistress of the household, the official rooms are meant as forms of visual representation. "The state apartments, properly speaking, exist purely for display, and this appears inseparable from a degree of unease and discomfort."[253] In other words, certain rooms were not created for the purpose of habitation, but were precisely created in order to create a visual impression. Thus, the proper arrangement of the ornaments and furnishings in intended for such formal rooms are crucial to achieving a desired *visual* effect. Le Camus writes, for example that "the arrangement of the modillions governs the harmony of the whole; the modillion is the source of those large masses that determine character; its alignments are the source of concord, and it alone sets the tone and regulates the distribution of the whole."[254]

In privileging the sense of sight, Le Camus' text firmly puts power in the vision of the master, who places his servants under constant surveillance. Much as the landowner in Watelet's *ferme ornée* can reap the fruits of his land with a single sweep of the eye, it is the master alone in Le Camus' text who has the ability to traverse both the official sites of representation and the

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[252] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 110.

[253] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 105.

[254] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 111.

secret corridors and pockets of space where he remains invisible, able to spy on the doings of scheming servants.[255]

Ultimately, Le Camus' understanding of decoration depended upon the ancien régime system of social order, where a regulated opulence served as a marker of each patron's rightful place within a fixed social hierarchy.[256] The plainest, unornamented spaces were reserved for the servants at the antechambers located at the outer edges of the hôtel. While raising one's eyes above to the modillons and the cornices marking the location where ceiling and wall meet, one could recognize the signs of magnificence or grandeur necessary to evoking the proper character of the master.

Inside Revolutionary Spaces

With the end of the ancien régime, decoration's place as a marker of vertical hierarchies was repositioned. It articulated instead the Revolution's horizontal visions of equality. As Mona Ozouf has persuasively argued in her work on the festivals of the French Revolution, with the proliferation of columns, squares, and triumphal arches, the Revolution's public architecture effectively eradicated the interior.[257] Privileging the horizontality of outdoor spaces, Ozouf writes that

> Indeed, the theme of the dwelling is particularly rare in the
> architectural projects of the Revolution. For the most part, the

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[255] Le Camus, *Genius of Architecture*, 108. In describing his ferme ornée, Watelet writes that "the residence..which is meant to combine the useful and the pleasureable, should be oriented so as to allow the buildings surrounding it to come into view without obstruction. Claude-Henri Watelet, *Essay on Gardens : a Chapter in the French Picturesque,* Samul Donon, trans. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 26.

[256] Cf. Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior : Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), especially her discussion of decorum and the policing of social orders.

[257] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 134-5.

buildings erected on the occasion of festivals never lent themselves
to evoking a hollow space, even when they were required to house
something. The massive volume of the pyramids, columns, and
obelisks was imposed not by convenience but by the requirements
of symbolism."[258]

This evacuation of the interior is instantiated in Percier and Fontaine's project for a

monument to France's heroes (1794) that the architects submitted for the militant art

competitions that took place in *l'an II*, the year of the Terror. [Figure 2.20] The drawing depicts

a monument in the form of a stepped pyramid, with four platforms engraved with the names of

the war dead supporting a square Doric temple resting upon a tall stylobate. Each successive

platform has simultaneously been envisioned as a terrace for cypress trees. In a curious section

drawing of the monument, [Figure 2.21] the structure is shown as a completely solid form, one

giant Egyptian tomb contrasted with the pure exteriority of the Doric temple at the summit,

housing a statue of Liberty, which would only become visible upon crossing the steps of the

temple.[259] The citizens coming to remember the dead would have been forced to contemplate the

entire surface of the building, as they made the long and meandering ascent to the top via sets of

stairs placed on opposing axes. There is little that is classical about this form, which evokes

more of the ziggurat rather than the Greek temple. It is clear, however, that Percier and Fontaine

sought to create an interactive element through their design by incorporating viewers into the

monument. For it is clear from the plan that the building was to serve as nothing more than a

platform for an active procession memorializing France's dead heroes.

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[258] Ozouf, *Festivals*, 135.

[259] Percier and Fontaine, Projet de monument pour les défenseurs de la Patrie, Accession Number D3681, Musee Carnavalet, Paris, France. As Werner Szambien notes, the laurel trees that the architects' design called for are only indicated in the plan of the temple. They would have obscured the names of the war dead and the larger decorative program, had they been planted. Werner Szambien, *Les projets de l'an II : Concours d'architecture de la période revolutionnaire* (Paris: Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1986), 82.

Percier and Fontaine participated in the attempts to create a new architectural vocabulary for the republic. As the chapter on their early formation has shown, Percier in particular was deeply entrenched in the committees and organizations, which filled the institutional void following the dissolution of the royal academies in 1793. On professional terms, Percier and Fontaine's extensive work for the French theater during the 1790s attests to their active involvement in the aesthetic of the revolution orchestrated by the painter and statesman Jacques-Louis David.[260] All of the decorative objects they designed and the decors they constructed during the period following their separate returns from Rome until the Consulate period, whether for private *citoyens* or for the public stage, bore a political message of loyalty to the new republic. The early projects featured in the *Recueil* bear the traces of Percier and Fontaine's official productions during the Terror.

On a broader level, Percier and Fontaine's work during this period must be viewed within a transformed aesthetic context. Architectural discourse abandoned a classical rhetoric and the pleasures of the senses, in favor of a more forceful understanding of buildings as a form of public instruction, educating the public on the morals of the new *res publica*. As Werner Szambien's work on the Concours de l'An II has indicated, the Committee on Public Safety and the National Convention sought to open architecture to everyone by initiating a series of competitions for public buildings in the spring of 1794. Calls were made for a truly democratic architecture reflected even in the process of the competitions' criteria and the election of judges. François-Marie Neveu, who joined the École polytechnique as a drawing instructor in 1794, described the task of the architects succinctly: "From now on artists will no longer construct chateaux for

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[260] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 152.

pride, churches for superstition, and boudoirs for sensual pleasure: instead they will elevate

national buildings, vast constructions and masterpieces of architecture."[261]

There has been a tendency to read the architecture of the revolution as a perilous slide

into a totalitarian aesthetics that had nothing to do with the utopian projects launched at the end

of the ancien régime. By contrast, the designs that emerged in the earlier part of the eighteenth

century marked French architecture's true contribution to architectural historiography. This view

was largely due to the work of Emil Kaufmann, who argued that a properly revolutionary

architecture had already emerged at the end of the ancien regime, in terms of a perfect union

between an aesthetic "avant-garde" that announced a new social and political spirit, with the

architects Boullée, Ledoux and Lequeu. As Szambien and others have rightfully demonstrated,

Kaufmann's idealist and essentially teleological study of eighteenth-century architecture sought

its ultimate historical justification in the emergence of a 20th-century architectural avant-

garde.[262]

For Percier and Fontaine, the revolutionary period was significant turning point in the

conception of a new architectural theory. A glance at architectural publications printed around

1800 indicates that the Vitruvian orders were no longer the primary subject of architectural

discourse. Competing forms of authority emerged, rooted above all in the transformed political

climate of the period. This is vociferously expressed in the title of Ledoux' book, *L'architecture*

considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation (1804). Architecture no

longer occupies its own arena. It must acknowledge and draw upon its relationship to art, social

mores and legislation. Szambien argues nonetheless that the orders and ornament in fact

continued to play an important role in architectural discourse during the revolution, turning for

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[261] Quoted in Szambien, *Les projets de l'an II*, 24.

[262] Szambien, *Les projets de l'an II*, 19.

example, to Nicolas Raffron de Trouillet's essay, *Recherches sur l'origine des ornements d'architecture* (1793). The terse text by the deputy of the national convention reads like a political pamphlet, intent on denigrating the language of architectural ornament. The author writes that the origin of all architectural ornaments did not emerge from the genius or perfection of society. They were the result of a series of accidents, where wind or vermin had eaten away at stone: "I had set out to prove that architecture had taken a large part of its ornaments from the degradation of buildings (whatever the causes). I did not want to write an architectural treatise."[263] Instead of a language of elevation, Raffron continually employs words of debasement conjuring a picture of monuments in a continual process of disintegration. The architectural orders form the unremarkable backdrop to a brief discussion of elements such as the triglyph, which constitutes "engravings traced perpendicularly and repeated three-by-three along the length of the frieze of the Doric order."[264] Reading Raffron's prosaic text, one gains the sense that ornament itself was implicated in the language of royalty, and therefore had to be unmasked as nothing more than the accidental work of nature, rather than proof of the highest levels of artistic achievement. This architectural degeneration was no doubt also linked to the perceived degeneration of the monarchy.[265] For as we saw in the previous chapter, one of the principal tasks according to architects such as Percier was to destroy the traces of the monarchy inscribed in architectural ornaments.

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[263] Nicolas Raffron de Trouillet, *Recherches Sur L'origine Des Ornemens D'architecture* (Paris: Imprimerie du Citoyen Brosselard, 1793).

12.Je m'étois proposé de prouver que l'architecture avoit tiré des dégradations des édifices (quelles qu'en aient été les causes) une grande partie de ses ornements Je n'ai pas voulu faire un traité d'architecture. Raffron de Trouillet, *Recherches*, 12.

[264] Raffron de Trouillet, *Recherches*, 6.

[265] See "Regeneration," in François Furet and Mona Ozouf, *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

While ornament may have signaled architecture's complicity in the degenerated monarchy for Raffron de Trouillet, the architectural theorist Quatremère de Quincy believed that man's survival was rooted in his impulse to decorate and embellish the objects around him. Quatremère de Quincy devoted an extensive entry to decoration in the second volume of *Architecture* (1788-1825), his contribution to the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, a project intended to supplement and revise Diderot and D'Alembert's monumental reference work.[266] Published in 1801, Quatremère entry indicates that the basic definition of decoration is "the combination of all the objects and ornaments that the need for variety unites under all kinds of forms, in order to embellish, enrich, explain the subjects that form the domain of art and human industry."[267] He explains that to decorate an object reflects man's larger need for constant variety, in order to combat the monotony produced by uniformity. Although this view echoes the earlier sentiments voiced by Le Camus de Mézières, Quatrmère's anthropological reading places decoration as a part of an innate desire — or perhaps a drive — for the pleasures of variety and change. The pleasures afforded by decoration, he writes, nonetheless have a utilitarian aspect to them. For whatever man calls "ornament or decoration, is either the result of some need more or less known, or a necessary agent to the conservation of being, or the principle itself of its essence."[268] The usefulness of decoration in turn comes from man's desire to "multiply and vary his sensations; it also comes from the need to explain the objects of art and to let their usage, objective and propriety be known."[269]

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[266] Sylvia Lavin, "Re Reading the Encyclopedia: Architectural Theory and the Formation of the Public in Late-Eighteenth-Century France." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 2 (June 1, 1994): 184–192.

[267] Quatremère de Quincy, "Décoration," 172.

[268] Quatremère de Quincy, "Décoration," 174.

[269] Quatremère de Quincy, "Décoration," 175.

In Quatremère's conception, decoration makes architecture appear as an image for the intellect to gaze and reflect upon. The *Encyclopédie méthodique* constructed a conceptual framework in which to understand decoration. In contrast to the earlier writers we have seen, Quatremère breaks the term decoration down into its constituent meanings. He discusses it in theoretical terms, as well as the range of practices that comprise it, from festival decorations to those for the theater. Quatremère writes that decoration is particularly important for architecture, because it elevates architecture to an art form. In other words, it is what makes architecture an mimetic art like painting and sculpture. Architecture relies on ornament to produce and enhance its visual effects. The principles forms found in architectural decoration, according to Quatremère, have their sources in three factors: man's instinct for variety, analogy and allegory.[270] For the author, each of these three sources emerged according to the development of increasingly sophisticated societies, which required more complicated architectural vocabularies to describe the function of their buildings. The allegorical deployment of decoration elevates architecture into what Quatremère calls an "ocular language, a sort of hieroglyphic language." He writes that allegory is a "figured discourse, but it is the simple and natural expression of these arts of imitation that only speak through signs or figures." By borrowing these forms, Quatremère writes that architecture is able to endow buildings with a specificity of purpose and form, a "determined signification" that it could not otherwise.[271] Thus in the theorist's conception, decoration constitutes the central visual component to architecture, transforming a shelter for man's needs into a visual work of art.

Quatremère's entry on decoration is crucial for understanding why Percier and Fontaine's work at the theater formed such an integral part of their work. For he argued that theater

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[270] Quatremère de Quincy, "Décoration,"176.

[271] Quatremere, "Décoration," 179.

decorations posed one of the most challenging forms of art because the artist had to interpret the "actions that the poet places before the eyes of the spectator." Quatremère notes that on the stage, the designer must employ different means than festival decorations to amplify and emphasize the action that is taking place. Like architecture, theater decorations have their proper *convenance*, for the backdrop must match the subject of the performance. Key to the decorator's interpretation was the notion of *caractère*, which Quatremère, in the context of stage decoration, designates as the essential qualities of a particular performance. Thus, the decorator is more than an accessory part in the production of a play. He must be a *historien*:

> We have said that the goal [of theater decoration] is to represent the monuments or places where the action that the poet places in the theater before the spectators takes place. The decorator is thus a narrator [historien] in this aspect: if the action takes place in the Indies, in Persia, in Egypt, in Greece, in Rome, then not only the sites of countries, the trees, plants, animals, but moreover the architecture, the columns, the monuments, and the statues, must all carry different characteristics [caractères].

Quatremère goes on to say that the decorator of the theater must be knowledgeable, studying history and texts, in order to gain familiarity with the different peoples and cultures imagined by the playwrights. The decorator, perhaps more so than an architect constructing buildings alone, must rely upon a vast store of knowledge in order to undertake acts of artistic license in constructing is designs.

Percier and Fontaine's work as decorators during the revolution gains added significance when read against Quatremère de Quincy's notion of the decorator as a historian constructing a narrative of images intended to bring the playwright's text to life . Percier and Fontaine fortuitously became "*dessinateurs de decorations*" at the Opéra in Paris. At the end of 1791, Percier was asked to create the stage designs and costumes for *Lucrèce*, a tragedy written by the

playwright Antoine-Vincent Arnault. The play revisited the ancient Roman heroine Lucretia, whose suicide marked the end of monarchy and the birth of the Roman republic. In his memoir, Arnault writes that at the time he proposed staging his new play, the performances at the Théâtre-Français were undergoing a major transformation. Embarrassed at the opera's past habit of staging tragedies with costumes of a "gothic magnificence and a decor made of featureless rags," Arnault recalled that for his play *Lucrèce*, "it was decided that the material of Roman tragedies would be completely renewed, and that for the creation of the decorations and the costumes, one would consult the architects and the painters best known for the purity of their taste and the extent of their knowledge."[272] Arnault originally solicited David to design the setting for his play. However, after seeing the playwright wearing clothing embroidered with the fleur de lys, the sign of royalist sympathies, the painter told him that he could not possibly design for someone with such political connections. Arnault then turned to Pierre-Adrien Pâris, who had known political sympathies with Louis XVI. Paris in turn suggested Percier and Fontaine.[273]

According to Fontaine, Arnault sought to endow his play with a newfound historical accuracy, so that the "town, the fields, and the primitive habitations of ancient Rome under the Tarquins were represented with a truthfulness and antique accent that he had put, [Arnault] said, in the mouth of each of his personages."[274] *Lucrèce* had three decors for its five acts. The first featured the camp of the Tarquins, the second, the vestibule of the palace of Collatin, Lucretia's husband. The final scene took place in Lucretia's living quarters.[275] A sketch that depicts a backdrop composed of an arcade with Tuscan columns, tondi and rounded niches has been

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[272] Antoine-Vincent Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire* (Paris: H. Champion, 2003 [Reprint]),170.

[273] According to Fontaine, it was Percier's student Salverte who introduced him to the playwright. Fontaine, "Mia Vita," 33.

[274] Fontaine, "Mia Vita," quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 152.

[275] Jeanne Duportal, *Charles Percier (1764-1838) Reproductions de Dessins conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Institut* (Paris: M. Rousseau, 1931), 28.

connected to Percier and Fontaine's designs for *Lucrèce*.[276] Scholars have noted the design's

striking resemblance to David's painting, *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784) [Figure 2.22].[277] I n the

painting, the three brothers of the Horatii family take an oath before their father against a stark

architectural backdrop. The scene has been reduced to a shadowy, closed courtyard and an

arcade, with the arches resting on baseless Doric columns. David himself was an active part of

the effort to reform the costume and scenery of the Parisian stage. His paintings and work at the

theater closely mirrored each other. In 1790, he designed the Roman costumes that the actor

Talma wore while performing Voltaire's play, *Brutus*. The same tragic Roman character had

been the protagonist in his painting of 1789, *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*

[Figure 2.23]. In this painting, as in the one from 1784, the architectural setting constitutes a

crucial visual element of the painting's composition. The Doric columns, antique furnishings

and costume together lent a sense of archaeological reality to the dramatic scene.[278]

　　　As David's involvement with the stage shows, the theater exerted a profound influence

on the aesthetics of the revolution. Percier and Fontaine were also deeply engaged in rethinking

the theater from an architectural perspective. This is indicated by their submission to the

concours de l'An II. Responding to the competition's demand for a covered arena, Percier and

Fontaine designed a "theater to celebrate the triumphs of the Republic through public song,"

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[276] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*,153.

[277] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*,153. On the political significance of David's work in the formation of a public sphere, see Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For a broader reassessment of David, see Régis Michel, ed. *David contre David : Actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre par le service culturel du 6 au 10 décembre 1989* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1993).

[278] See Alvar Gonzalez-Palacios, "Jacques-Louis David: Le décor de l'Antiquité," in Régis Michel., ed. *David Contre David : Actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre par le service culturel du 6 Au 10 décembre 1989* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1993), Tome II, 929-63.

[Figure 2.24], a sprawling complex projected for the Quai d'Orsay area.[279] Percier and Fontaine sought to generate a design from the festival processions of the Revolution. The project is comprised of three porch-like temples [Figure 2.25] joined in the same structure with the theater located in the center, all set upon a stepped circus. Evocative of Rousseau's earlier calls for festivals enacting civic virtue,[280] Percier and Fontaine's theater collapsed performance and reality. For the theater's spectators faced not a stage, but an altar to victory, a sort of internalized triumphal arch that marked the threshold between the amphitheater seating and the entrance portico [Figure 2.26]. If, for Le Camus de Mézières, the antechambers and vestibules to the noble hôtel functioned as the proscenium arch announcing "the characters of the performers in the play," Percier and Fontaine's revolutionary design transformed the barrier, which separated performer from spectator into a permeable threshold.

Percier and Fontaine's work on *Lucrèce* undoubtedly drew upon the reforms that David had made on the stage. However, their architectural training gave them a different vantage point from the painter. Francois-André Vincent, David's rival who ultimately designed the costumes for Arnault's play, described his satisfaction with Percier and Fontaine's properly austere stage designs. In a letter, he described the decorations as being characterized by a "purity and simplicity of the grand...they were, without a doubt, according to me, animated by the desire to respond to a society that puts all its glories towards purifying the stage and to render all of its dignity." [281] As Vincent's description makes clear, Percier and Fontaine's backdrops were read as constitutive elements of Arnault's piece, which sought to bring back the Roman heroes of the

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[279] Percier and Fontaine, Projet de théâtre pour célébrer les chants civiques et les triomphes de la Révolution, Accession Number D8219, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France.

[280] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to D'Alembert and Writings for the Theater*, Allan Bloom, Charles Butterworth, Christopher Kelly, eds. (Hanover: Dartmouth College; UPNE, 2004).

[281] Quoted in Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 155.

past. Although Arnault's efforts met little praise, Percier and Fontaine's decorations for *Lucrèce*

garnered critical acclaim. According to Fontaine, the newspapers lauded their decorations,

"which were noted as much for the arrangement of the scenes, which were considered novel, as

for the distinctive character and antique forms that one knew to give to each part."[282] Following

this first successful endeavor into theater decors, Percier, and later Fontaine, became the official

decorators of the Opera at the end of 1792.[283] Later, they served as members of the Comité

central des arts, formed to oversee the opera. The committee operated under the ministry of the

interior, indicating the importance that the revolutionary government accorded to spectacles

performed on the stage.

There is a reciprocal influence found among Percier and Fontaine's projects from the

revolutionary period, from their stage designs to their proposal for a theater. The architects drew

heavily from the studies that they had made together in Rome, reimagining the spaces of noble

Italian galleries, villas and gardens they had seen into the settings for dramatic performances

both on and off the stage. This is made evident in two drawings of interiors from an album

belonging to Fontaine [Figure 2.27 and 2.28].[284] The first shows what appears to be the entrance

vestibule to a grand palace. A vaulted space with Corinthian columns leads to a central domed

space, with a pierced colonnaded drum. The curtains at the top of the image suggest that rather

than depicting an actual space, Fontaine had repurposed architectural elements he saw in Rome

for a stage decoration. In the same album is a decoration for the tragedy of Zaire, which features

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[282] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 33.

[283] Percier initially worked with Louis Pierre Baltard at the opera and the architects also collaborated with Thibault on a number of pieces. Jean-Philippe Garric, *Percier et Fontaine: Les architectes de Napoléon* (Paris:Bélin, 2012), 70.

[284] Pierre François Léonard Fontaine, *Disegni dall'antico di Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, 1762-1855, Architetto di Napoleone*, Daniela Di Castro and Stephen Paul Fox, eds. (Florence: Polistampa, 2007), Fol. LIII.4 and Fol. LVIII.

a perspectival view through a domed space and courtyard decorated with exotic arabesques. As in the previous image, the perspectival view features lions marking the entrance to the steps, in a similar mode to the stairway at the palace of Caserta. As we will see, the same perspectival drawing techniques that the architects utilized for the theater would be adopted in the *Recueil*.

Percier and Fontaine's contribution to the discourse of decoration was to bring the techniques of narration found in the revolutionary theater into the domestic interior. As we have seen in the previous discussion on decoration books, theatricality formed an important part of understanding how architectural decoration operated. For Boffrand, plan, structure and decoration were all expressive of the character of the building, which was to be displayed as if it were "on the stage."[285] Le Camus invoked the language of theater in his description of the interior, writing that the antechamber had to function as a proscenium arch, preparing viewers for the series of rooms to follow. It was Quatremère de Quincy who most clearly distinguished theater decoration as a subfield of decoration that required a different set of rules and conventions from the interior. In the theater, the backdrop is a two-dimensional surface and yet it is understood to function as a three-dimensional space in which the characters engage with one another. Quatremère argued that theater decorations had to amplify and condense certain elements of the play's text because the decorations are fixed and must accommodate different moments of the action. As Percier and Fontaine's work on *Lucrèce* shows, the sets had to be designed from specific moments of the play that were chosen for their narrative import. Thus, the architects had to be able to read a narrative and absorb it into a visual backdrop that would reflect the reality of the situation. The architects were praised above all for the accuracy of their representations. They had to construct a backdrop that would reflect the historical context of the

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[285] Boffrand, *Book of Architecture*, 10.

period at the same time that it would emblematize the important points or actions of a particular scene.

The opera provided the architects with a new audience for their work and consequently, new forms of visual expression that would prove decisive in the *Recueil*. They were not only expected to construct stage decorations for classically inspired dramas. They produced decorations for dance performances, such as *Psyché* (1795), a ballet pantomime, and *Elisca, ou l'amour maternel* (1799) [Figure 2.29], a lyrical drama set in Madagascar about a young Arab woman seeking to save her child from being sacrificed according to the customs of the Ombi tribe.[286] Percier and Fontaine were also required to visualize recent historical events. *Le siège à Thionville* dramatized the Republican army defending the small town in the northeast of France against royalist emigrés and the Austrian army. Their best-known work for the stage remained *Lucrèce*. It was after seeing their designs for Arnault's play that the furniture maker Georges Jacob sought out the young architects to provide him with designs for "republican furniture" to be installed in the new Salle de la Convention at the Tuileries Palace [Figure 2.30].

Within the republican politics of spectacle, every stage was a potential political arena, and every political platform a stage for drawing in the crowd. Although the extent of Percier and Fontaine's involvement in the creation of the Salle de la Convention has been debated, the association of their names with such an important political space suggests that by 1792, they had already become important architectural figures in the revolutionary projects organized by David.[287] For Victor Hugo, who associated the assembly room with Percier and Fontaine, their decorations epitomized the puritan Jacobin politics of the period. Writing that Percier and

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[286] Jean-Claude Halpern, "L'esclavage Sur La Scène Révolutionnaire," *Annales historiques de la révolution française*, 293: 1 (1993): 419.

[287] Ferdinand Boyer, "Notes sur les architectes Jacques-Pierre Gisors, Charles Percier et Pierre Vignon," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire et de l'art français* (1933): 258-69.

Fontaine were described by their Roman comrades as the "Etruscans" because of their "savagery and the cult that they had for primitive architecture," Hugo described their design for the salle de la convention as the exemplum of Messidor architecture: "All of this ensemble was violent, savage and regular. The builders of this time took symmetry for beauty....After the blinding orgies of form and color of the eighteenth century, art was placed on a diet, and was allowed nothing but straight lines."[288] Percier and Fontaine's lesser known design for the assembly hall for the Brutus section further demonstrates how little the architects' interior designs had to do with the notion of privacy or comfort. In 1794, Percier and Fontaine were commissioned by Sarette, a musician, with transforming the church of St. Joseph into a meeting room, guardroom, and office space for the political organizers of the Brutus section. The group was a radical local political organization based in the Montmartre neighborhood of Paris.

Hans Ottomeyer has linked a number of drawings found in an album attributed to the workshop of Percier and Fontaine held at the Fogg Museum in Cambridge to the architects' Brutus commission.[289] The drawings depict designs for a square room that opens onto two triangular shaped rooms, which have been rounded out into semicircular spaces terminated by two niches [Figure 2.31]. One of the niches contains a figure of the Republic holding a lance and wearing a Phrygian cap. Below her are written the words, Liberté and Egalité. In front of the statue, an altar-like table has been placed with appliqués depicting a balance. The opposite niche contains another altar depicting a bust of Nature, with flowers placed before her. The central circular ceiling painting depicts a repeating pattern of 10 Nikes surrounding a medallion of Apollo while the four corners depict Diana and Apollo in their chariots. The ceiling painting for

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[288] Victor Hugo, *1793*, quoted from Garric, Percier et Fontaine, 72-3.

[289] Album of twenty-six drawings related to the style of Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, Object Number 1963.147, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of John Goelet, Cambridge, MA.

the side niche depicts the figure of Chronos surrounded by ruins with a fan shape above him [Figure 2.32]. The ceiling design is painted in a more detailed color scheme in another drawing from the Fogg album, while another drawing depicts an alternate scheme of the circular motif featuring Apollo.[290] [Figure 2.33]

Ottomeyer writes that the political nature of the ornaments and the inclusion of an altar space makes it difficult to read this project as part of an individual's private residence. If the album indeed depicts Percier and Fontaine's commission, it shows that their interior decoration practice emerged from a process of clearing out spaces like the church of St. Joseph and forcing the decorative elements to reconfigure the space. One can detect a similarity in the compositional strategy of the Brutus section project and Percier and Fontaine's work at the opera. For like their backdrops for the theater, the republican themes written upon the walls of the former church could provide the right political narrative for members of the organization, in case they forgot what they were fighting for.

Return to the Interior

The *Recueil* can be read as the closure of Percier and Fontaine's career as public architects during the Revolution, and in some measure, an attempt to turn away from their more radical projects undertaken for the Committee of Public Safety. If the interior decoration book had had more pronounced political sympathies with the revolution, it is highly doubtful that the architects would have published it during the Empire period.[291] It is however clear that they drew

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[290] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 137.

[291] Based upon Fontaine's writings in his journal, both Percier and Fontaine were extremely sensitive to the changing political climates. During the Allied invasion of Paris in 1814, the architects burned many of their personal papers dealing with their projects from the revolutionary period.

from their experiences during this period in order to negotiate the new architecture market of the

Directory period. It was surprising to Fontaine that the architects would ultimately gain fame for

their interior designs. As he later recalled, "The bankers and suppliers ventured to display the

riches that they had acquired...[They] put us in charge of the restoration and the arrangement of

their houses. We became, I do not know exactly how, in fashion."[292] Within the decors of clients

who had grown wealthy from the Revolution's burgeoning war industry and uncertain economy,

Percier and Fontaine muted and domesticated the antique monuments that earlier had been

deployed to generate more radical forms of patriotism and equality.

One of their most celebrated interiors of the Directory period was designed for the

miniaturist Jean-Baptiste Isabey. Depicted by the genre painter Louis Leopold Boilly, [Figure

2.34] Percier and Fontaine's decor serves as the backdrop to a gathering of artists. Finely

dressed genre painters mingle freely with history painters, sculptors and architects, including

Percier and Fontaine, in the miniaturist's Louvre studio. Displayed in the Salon of 1799, Regis

Michel argues that the image marked the depoliticization of the arts and the new

professionalization of artists outside the academy, particularly following the incarceration of

David. Michel suggests that the "sycretism of symbolic motifs" found in the decor--from the

antique allegories surrounding the Bust of Minerva to the portrait medallions of Renaissance

artists above--signals the end of classical doctrine, rooted in the aesthetic and moral emulation of

Greco-Roman antiquity.[293]

The vestiges of a republican politics of display are present in the early plates of the

Recueil, notably in the captions that read "citoyen." Isabey's atelier commences the first cahier.

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[292] Fontaine, *Mia Vita*, 56

[293] Régis Michel, "L'art des salons," in Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel and Philippe Bordes, eds. *Aux Armes & Aux Arts! : Les Arts De La Révolution 1789-1799* (Paris: A. Biro, 1988), 82-4.

[Figure 2.35].[294] The decision to begin with the artist's studio, rarely featured in decoration books of the eighteenth century, is significant. It suggests the new found social status that artists enjoyed during the Directory period and the artistic ambitions that Percier and Fontaine had for their own decoration projects. Like Boullée beginning his essay on architecture with the painter Correggio's quote, "Ed io anche son pittore," Isabey's studio serves as the *image clé* to the architects' collection of interior decorations.

In contrast to Boilly's depiction of Isabey's studio as crowded space of artistic sociability, Percier and Fontaine open the *Recueil* with an empty perspectival view of a room "which serves as a work cabinet and bedroom." Visible is the bed placed upon a platform, with antique inspired drapes hung behind it. On the ceiling is a painting depicting, on the side of the room closer to the windows, Apollo, God of the day, riding across a chariot, and closer to the bed, Diana, symbol of night [Figure 2.36]. A frieze in bas-relief depicts the medallion portraits of painters, sculptors and architects from the Renaissance, while the names of famed antique cities are written within wreaths on the corner pilasters of the room [Figure 2.37]. Below the frieze of the Italian *hommes illustres*, the arts--painting, architecture, sculpture and engraving--are depicted on panels done in an "Etruscan style," mimicking the effect of black and red vase painting. As the architects note in the explanatory text, "The ornaments that accompany the principal subjects and which compose the details of this room, are analogous to the arts of design [dessin]. They have to do with the tastes and talents of the skilled artist for whom they were executed."[295] Throughout the plates, ornament bears the pressure of signification.

The *Recueil* is Percier and Fontaine's only book to deal specifically with their commissioned projects. Up until the *Recueil*, Percier and Fontaine had published a series of

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[294] With the execption of plate 6, which features a chair designed probably for Charles Dumanoir.

[295] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 20.

books that were essentially archaeological projects focusing on the villas and domestic

architecture of Italy. After publishing the plates of the *Recueil*, the architects chose to write an

ambitious preliminary discourse on the importance of interior decoration that would transform

the book from a mere collection of commissioned projects into a theoretical framework.

Moreover, the preliminary discourse upends the traditional emphasis on the architectural orders,

instead harnessing a theory of taste to minor artistic productions, such as decorative objects.

Percier and Fontaine write that

> in publishing the collection of furnishings and interior decorations
> which comprise this work, and which the originals were executed
> from our designs at different epochs, we are far from presuming to
> offer artists models to imitate. Our ambition would be satisfied if
> we could be satisfied in contributing to expanding and maintaining
> the principles of taste that we drew from antiquity in a material so
> variable and so subject to the vicissitudes of opinion and caprice,
> and which we believe is linked, albeit in a less perceivable link, to
> the general laws of the true, the simple, and the beautiful, which
> must govern eternally over all the productions in the realm of
> imitation.[296]

Percier and Fontaine seek to place the decorative arts, or what they term *les arts industriels*

under the sign of imitation and the fine arts. The question of where exactly to place the minor

arts was a primary problem at the end of the eighteenth century in France, as industry,

commercialism and consumerism began encroaching on the aesthetics of the *beau idéal*.[297] As

Napoleon rose to political power, France's national economy became an essential part of the

ongoing war with England, as he sought to make France the central purveyor of luxury goods on

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[296] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* 1.

[297] For a discussion of the discursive shift in art criticism to consider the problem of the arts in relation to industry, specifically within the context of the salon during the Napoleonic period, see Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting : Antoine-Jean Gros's La Bataille d'Eylau* (Oxford: Clarendon Press : 1997).

the continent. Percier and Fontaine's text echoes Quatremère de Quincy's later attempts to

distinguish between mere copying and true imitation,[298] even as they plates of the *Recueil*

advertise and elevate the status of artisans like Jacob Desmalter and Martin-Guillaume Biennais.

We need only to recall Boffrand's theory of taste and its association with ancient rhetoric

and the liberal arts to understand just how different Percier and Fontaine's project is. In

Boffrand's case, the architect's judgment and sense of *bon goût* distinguished him from the mere

stonemason or carpenter and thus allowed him to be a proper judge of architectural propriety.

For Percier and Fontaine, taste does not serve to distinguish the well-read humanist architect

from the illiterate laborer. It is instead understood as the unconscious marker of an age, the

imprint of time, which can only be discerned from the distanced perspective of connoisseurial

knowledge:

> The theory of taste would not know to separate in this empire the
> lightest products of art from its most vast works. A common node
> joins them. An active and reciprocal influence is exercised
> between them. Whatever the manner of imitating or making which
> dominates a time or a country, the enlightened eye of the
> connoisseur can distinguish them, and follows the effect and
> consequences of the grand enterprises of the art of painting,
> sculpting and building, as well as of the most minor works of the
> industrial arts, which commingle with all of the needs and
> pleasures of the social state.[299]

While the connoisseur's knowing eye can determine the historical character of different works of

art, it is the laborer who is the one who endows objects with the particular spirit of an age. An

epoch can be judged, the architects argue, on the basis of its "domestic utensils." They ask,

"Who cannot distinguish the direction of the spirit of taste of each period by the details of

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[298] Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur la nature, le but et les moyens de l'imitation dans les beaux-arts* (Paris: Treuttel and Würtz, 1823).

[299] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 7.

domestic utensils, the objects of luxury or necessity to which the worker involuntarily gives the imprint of forms, the contours and the types of usage of his time? Don't we count the generations, if one can say so, by the forms of tables, chairs, furnishings and tapestries?" And for Percier and Fontaine, Raphael's genius is marked not by his monumental paintings, but by his hand touching the most minor ornaments.[300] Even in the case of antiquity, the recent excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii show that the ancient Greeks and Romans took care to decorate and ornament the smallest domestic utensils and furnishings of the home.

Despite their celebration of the principles of antiquity, Percier and Fontaine grudgingly acknowledge the power of fashion and its hold on modern society and over what should be the unfaltering principles of taste. They write that fashion, "that great overseer of works of art," owes its power to three chief sources, namely moral, social and commercial. The moral source of fashion is innate to human nature, and man's desire for change. Percier and Fontaine maintain that this is not a negative aspect of fashion and that the arts are the "most devoted ministers of this natural inclination."[301] Indicating that there are two means of satisfying this natural human desire through art, the authors describe two methods of artistic practice, which echo Claude Perrault's division of the orders between arbitrary and positive beauty, one latter being based in the unchanging rules of nature and the former based in social customs.[302] The first case "consists in conserving in all objects that which is the originary type, the principle, or the necessary reason, and to vary, without harming the base, the accessory forms, the details, the circumstances, in a way so that the essential is invariable, and that only the accidental changes.

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[300] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 7.

[301] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 10.

[302] Rykwert, *The First Moderns*.

This was the way of the ancients, from the temple to clay vases."[303] This first means of creating art in order to satisfy the desire for change is not that adopted by the moderns, whose love of change destroys both the principle and accessory parts of any form. Percier and Fontaine attribute the source of fashion's influence to social and commercial causes. The authors launch a critique of society indebted to Rousseau, who argued that the origins of inequality between men stemmed from society itself. Percier and Fontaine describe a society of the spectacle, where the fierce competition to be seen creates a never-ending battle for new objects and ways of dress:

> The way of being and the habits of modern societies, which place
> all individuals in a spectacle in the places of promenade, of
> conversation, of games, and of pleasure, have stimulated to the
> highest degree the desire to please, on the one hand, and the desire
> to distinguish one's self on the other. From this this empire of
> fashion in all that has to do with dressing, finery and manners:
> from this comes that action always reborn where the many imitate
> the few who give the tone, and the little number to stop as soon as
> the many adopt them....Each cedes to those more or less promptly,
> and one conforms in a multitude of things which, from near or far,
> attack the imitation of the true and the beautiful.

This understanding of fashion and its ability to disturb the principles of architecture is reminiscent of Boffrand's earlier remarks written roughly three quarters of a century earlier. But in Percier and Fontaine's later text, fashion is granted even greater power. For Percier and Fontaine, fashion represents a threat to the very principles of architecture and the concept of artistic imitation.[304] For unlike the other arts for which nature provides concrete models to imitate, architecture's models are invisible, residing "in an abstract and analogical model that is accessible only to intelligence, to reason and to the emotions."[305] Architecture is a form of thought and rationalization. This invisibility of architecture is why, they argue, controlling the

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[303] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* 10-11.

[304] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 11.

[305] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 11.

material effects of the interior through informed design is essential. It is imperative that architects maintain their reason against the power of fashion and its ability to take hold of individuals and create the demand for objects without taste and without true authors. For, allied with industry, they write, "l'empire de la mode" takes over and "reproduces [things] in a million cheap ways, and places them in the hands of the least fortunate," a process of vulgarization that must be avoided at all costs. Echoing the utilitarian theory of Durand, they write that decoration must spring first from construction, and forms must spring naturally from the function of the object. The interior is not excluded from the vagaries of fashion, for "decoration and furnishing become in houses what clothing is to people: everything in this genre ages too, and in a few years passes for something outmoded and ridiculous." [306]

For Percier and Fontaine, the interior is the site of a power struggle not only between architectural principles and the social vices represented by fashion. In contrast to the stringent writings of Quatremère de Quincy, which seek to isolate his theory of imitation within the closed sphere of the arts alone, Percier and Fontaine do not cordon off the arts from social influence. However, the architects do seek to reclaim the interior as the proper domain of architectural authority.

> We believe that with the relationship of correspondence that exists
> between architecture and furnishing, the architect must guard
> against abandoning the direction [of furnishing] to workers, and
> that in the interest of art and for his own honor, he cannot be more
> careful in an area whose good or bad employment affects the very
> fate of architecture.[307]

While the laborer may have unconsciously imprinted the spirit of an age on "domestic utensils," it was up to the architect to consciously guide the worker through enlightened designs.

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[306] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 11.

[307] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 14.

Percier and Fontaine's insistence that the architect hold his own against the workers in the

interior also responds to a transformed market in post-Revolutionary France. As Katie Scott's

work on the Rococo interior has shown, the interior was always a site of struggle, on a material

concrete level between the architect and the contractors and skilled craftsmen, as well as a more

symbolic one between owners who sought to fashion their own identity from decorative motifs

that were not dominated by the regime of taste emerging from the court of Louis XIV.[308]

However, following the dissolution of the guild system around 1790, the threat of worker unrest

was real.[309] Percier and Fontaine further reinforce this argument by saying that the "spirit of

decoration" must be accompanied by sound construction, which "is in buildings what the

skeleton is to the human body." Decoration and construction have an intimate relationship, and

they write that "one must embellish without entirely masking."[310]

The sequence of plates in each cahier of the *Recueil* reaffirms the relationship between

architectural structure and decoration and furnishing. For example, the second cahier begins

with an elevation of the petit salon of C.C., a small room that the architects decided to turn into a

boudoir because of its modest proportions [Figure 2.38]. The decoration represents a "temple of

Venus" and is "decorated with varied ornaments which relate to the goddess of beauty."[311] The

entrances to the small boudoir have been masked by draped cloth. In contrast to the opening

plate of the second cahier, the subsequent plates depict monumental furnishings that dwarf the

diminutive feel of the boudoir elevation. A large standing clock with Egyptian motifs is

followed by an imposing chimney decorated with gilt bronze ornaments [Figure 2.39]. The cast

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[308] Scott, Katie. *The Rococo Interior.*

[309] Liana Vardi, "The Abolition of the Guilds During the French Revolution." *French Historical Studies* 15: 4 (Oct. 1988): 704–717.

[310] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* 14.

[311] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, "Table explicative," plate XII.

iron fireback, formed from a demilunette, features the forges of Vulcan. The accompanying

explanation describes how the architects sought to hide the joins between the abutment and

crosspiece with the projecting molding that connects them. A monumental *jardinière*, or flower

holder, is featured on plate 10, where a footed vase with Triton's three-pronged spear contains

living fish [Figure 2.40]. To further clarify the internal structure of the enormous form, plate 11

depicts the section and the plan of the table [Figure 2.41].

The third cahier opens similarly with a perspectival view that shows the ensemble of

furnishings organized into a set decor. The bedroom of Citoyen V. is shown facing the entrance

and towards the chimney place, with a large freestanding pilaster in the center of the room

[Figure 2.42]. The architects explain that the bedroom has been decorated with oil paint on

plaster, which "fills, without a determined subject, the various different compartments, among

which one finds fruit tableaux, fragments of useful objects, combined and painted in grisaille."[312]

Emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between decoration and utility, the architects have

transformed a freestanding pedestal featuring a seated goddess accompanied by the inscription

"To the good goddess" into a closet for nightclothes [Figure 2.43]. The succeeding plates of

cahier three depict details of the same bedroom, as if picking apart the same room in several

different representations, from an elevation showing details of the bed, to close ups of the panel

paintings covering the walls. The last plate shows a symmetrical arrangement of Greek-inspired

vases, from volute kraters to drinking cups and oil lamps. The architects write that they "sought

to make them convenient [commodes] by their form, and above all to make them easy to

execute."[313]

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[312] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, "table explicative," plate XVIII.

[313] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, table explicative, plate XVIII.

In the *Recueil*, furniture and decorative objects, rather than the distribution of rooms or the arrangement of an architectural facade, are generative sources of design. In the opening plate of cahier IV, Percier and Fontaine muster the forces of antiquity to impose a sense of order on the spaces of privacy. Harnessing their knowledge of antiquity, they transformed the client's bed into a little "temple to Diana," using the goddess as the principle decorative motif for the rest of the narrow, rectangular bedroom [Figure 2.44]. The monumental form of the temple has been brought into the space of the interior in order to completely transport the bedroom's inhabitant to another time and place. The room's ceiling, pitched in order to accommodate the imposing bed placed on a platform in the middle of the room, is meant to look as if it is being upheld by *piliers à jour*, which renders visible "the greenness of the trees among which one imagines that this little temple had been raised."[314] In plate 31, the monumental chimney seemingly floating in the midst of an enormous hall structures what is in fact a gallery [Figure 2.45]. The chimney, terminated by two bearded herms with pseudo-Greek inscriptions is set against a pair of ionic columns, which form but a minor part of the gallery's lavish decoration. The vaulted ceilings contain panels of vegetal and floral forms while one of the friezes shows classical figures engaged in a sacrificial ceremony before an altar. Mirrors serve to infinitely extend the decorations. In a faint echo of the architects' revolutionary period designs, the fireplace cover features two kneeling figures wearing phrygian caps.

The clients mentioned in the *Recueil* are transformed into universal types, fixed by the forms created by the architects. Anchored to the preliminary discourse, the images of the *Recueil* work against the vagaries of fashion, recuperating decoration's link to social decorum and order. The architects attempt to express the *caractère*, or the essential quality of each

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[314] Plate XXV.

individual client, through the interior. The decorative scheme in plate 30 [Figure 2.46], featuring a bed covered in animal hides, ties the identity of the client, a Monsieur T à Paris, to an ancient precedent. A frieze depicting heroic nudes in hunting scenes and Achillean shields hanging by the bed secure a visual link between the client's present hobby of hunting and the heroism of antiquity.

The proper usage of decoration also serves to establish gender divisions. In plate 37, [Figure 2.47], the architects explain, "one sees, by the richness and abundance of ornaments that enter into the ensemble of this composition, that it is a woman's bedroom."[315] Plate 37 is contrasted to the previous image, which forms "one of the least rich rooms of this collection." Relying less upon symbols or icons, the principle of ornateness or bareness thus become associated with female or male spaces. According to decorative arts historian Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, the binary opposition between male and female formed part of Percier and Fontaine's attempts to create a decorative language that was legible and easily comprehensible, a far contrast to the obscure allegorical representations utilized during the seventeenth century.[316] She writes that the pervasive symmetry in the later plates of the *Recueil* constitutes the core of what becomes known as the Empire style: "these compact representations, going to the essential through a short narration, are centered on contrasted surfaces and invite an immediate, synthesizing reading, confirming that the quotidian nourishes itself from eternal values thanks to images."[317] The principle of repetition and a cast of easily recognized characters pronounce the new empire's clear and obvious filiation from a Roman precedent.[318]

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[315] Plate XXXVII.

[316] See Erica Harth, *Ideology and Culture*.

[317] Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, "Discours de l'ornement sous l'Empire," in *L'Aigle et le papillon*, 30.

[318] Nouvel-Kammerer, "Discours de l'ornement," 30-1.

It is in within the empire's legible discourse of ornament that a form of furniture called the *psyché* [Figure 2.48] gained popularity. Typically formed of a single sheet of mirror set within a pivoting frame that is either oval or square, the psyché emerged at the end of the eighteenth century within women's boudoirs. It rendered the full body visible within the same picture frame for the first time.[319] Plate 22 of the *Recueil* offers one elaborate model designed by the architects, shown alongside the *jardinière* the architects had created for the interior in plate 13 [Figure 2.49]. The oval mirror, depicted in section and elevation, is surrounded by thin frame of gilded bronze. The supports are in the shape of narrow columns, terminating in seated sphinxes at the bottom and sprouting forth swans at the top. A Greek vase balances delicately at the very top of the mirror. The architects write that the entire glass has been placed within an iron armature and supported by two pivots "that allow it to be inclined at will."[320]

Scholars have connected the creation of this type of mirror with the visual politics of bodily display that took place in the more liberal culture of Directoire France. The *psyché* was connected to fashionable interiors, also indicating how important the spectacle of dress and fashion had become for French society after the Terror [Figure 2.50]. In her psychoanalytical reading of David's usage of mirrors to display his painting of *The Sabine Women* (1799), Ewa Lajer-Burcharth reads the *psyché* as a part of David's attempts to create a new aesthetic centered on the female body.[321] She connects the mirror's ability to render the complete body visible with the desire to make whole a collective "psychosocial" body that had been fragmented and torn apart by the violence of the Terror, a period that was marked above all by the dismembered victims of the guillotine. One of the effects of rendering the body fully visible to the eye,

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[319] Nouvel-Kammerer, "Discours de l'ornement," 31.

[320] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* Plate XXII.

[321] Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, *,Necklines : the Art of Jacques-Louis David After the Terror* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999).

according to Lajer-Burcharth, was to allow for the Directory period bourgeoisie to visualize a new ideal self. The *psyché* displayed in plate 22 of the *Recueil* does not have a corresponding body to be reflected or made whole. What gives the new type of mirror particular significance in the context of Percier and Fontaine's oeuvre is that it had to be read as part of a larger decorative composition, wherein all the aspects of the interior--from the smallest objects to the broadest expanses of wall--required the supervision of the architect. It was the framing of the body--not the body itself--that generated meaning in the *Recueil*.

The Culture of the Line

Providing their plates with an extensive theoretical framework ensured that the images would be allied to the architectural principles they sought to maintain in their partnership. The preliminary discourse and explanatory table of the *Recueil* were added as a part of the twelfth and final installment in 1812, after the last plates were issued and after their own interior decorations had fallen out of favor. As the notice for the publication suggests, the architects did not initially intend to publish a preliminary discourse to their designs, suggesting that the book would have resembled more of a pattern book of ornaments done for students to copy.

The fear of fashion that they describe suggests the encroachment of industry, mass production and consumption upon the Neoclassical discourse of imitation and the ideal. It also carries undercurrents of class and the palpable threat of popular culture, perhaps represented by the mass of cheap ornament books being issued alongside the *Recueil*. For instance, a representative example is Joseph Beunat's catalog of stucco ornaments.[322] In Beunat's numbered

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[322] Louis Kuchly, *Joseph Beunat: Le Genial Stucateur Sarrebourgeois* (Sarrebourg: Societe d'histoire d'archeologie de Lorraine, Section de Sarrebourg, 1996).

catalog, ornaments taken from Roman sarcophagi and tombs are featured alongside religious icons of Jesus and Mary, with little understanding for how these elements would be integrated into an interior. [Figure 2.51] As Beunat's own work as a *stuccateur* shows, he hardly created the sorts of refined, sophisticated furnishings of which Percier and Fontaine's collaborators in Paris were capable.

The image of architecture that Percier and Fontaine present in the preliminary discourse is of an art form on the brink of collapse and under constant threat. It is not the great monuments, but the minor productions of the industrial arts and the domestic utensils of the home, which make legible the unconscious spirit of an age. In a further overturning of architecture's language of monumentality, the unexpected lifeline for architecture is engraving and the reproduced image.

In the preliminary discourse, the authors are acutely aware that architecture persists thanks to the mediation of the reproduced image. They recognize that the survival of their work depends upon the circulation of their designs through images. They seek to control that reproductive process. Even antiquity, they write, has only been rendered accessible through the mediation of images. They give as an example the recent excavation of the domestic interiors at sites such as Herculaneum and Pompeii, begun during the mid-eighteenth century. Such sites, they argue, are neither accessible to the public nor have they survived the ravages of time. Instead, their representation in engravings, along with the few discovered fragments, are what give us a partial picture of the past. They write that "The art of engraving, which, like that of printing, has the property of multiplying works, will perhaps also have the advantage of rendering them imperishable. But another benefit of this art, is of fixing through collections of prints a multitude of things that by their nature are temporary and are condemned to leave no

memories, which even tradition cannot guarantee their survival."[323] It is the mobile, reproduced image, not the monument itself, that secures the permanence of architecture, a view that would also explain Percier and Fontaine's own prolific work in publishing.

The popularization of outline engraving in architecture and ornament books has largely been ascribed to the downgrading of the publication market. Anne-Dion Tenenbaum writes that the *Recueil* appeared alongside a number of other ornament books, which utilized outline engraving, a technique which had the advantages of "rapidity and economy, and which favorizes vulgarization."[324] Percier and Fontaine clearly indicate that their initial decision to utilize this reproduction technique for the *Recueil* stemmed from cost-saving measures, since it was a relatively simple form of engraving that the architects were able to learn themselves. In his autobiography, Fontaine wrote that they considered the *Recueil* along with their first book on the palaces of Rome as cheaper books, compared to their later book, *Choix des plus célèbres maisons de Rome*, which was printed on a grand format and produced using an etching process rather than engraving.

The choice of reproductive technique cannot be reduced to economics alone. A strong aesthetic and epistemological component motivated the decision of artists and architects to utilize a particular kind of reproductive technique to print their work. For example, Gilles-Paul Cauvet, in his *Recueil d'ornemens* (1777), chose a technique that mimicked the soft chalk drawings associated with the soft, feminine work of Boucher.[325] Cauvet's engravings retained a freshness, which seem as if they had just been drawn. The prints also facilitated a certain naturalism that pushed against any sense of rigid symmetry and called instead for the depiction

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[323] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* 9.

[324] Dion-Tenenbaum, "Les Recueils d'ornements," 66.

[325] I thank Peter Fuhring for the reference to this fascinating book.

of living forms, even for ornaments intended for buildings. Cauvet's depiction of acanthus leaves in order to illustrate Vitruvius' origin myth for the Corinthian column shows just how different his conception of ornament was from Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations, whose straight lines and rigid symmetry are completely divorced from Cauvet's mimetic vision of nature. [Figure 2.52] Cauvet's illustration indicates that for the sculptor, architecture, like other arts, was to imitate nature as a visual model. In contrast, Percier and Fontaine view nature as distilled into an abstract set of principles and rules.

In a broader cultural context, outline engraving evoked the central place of the contour in Neoclassical aesthetics of the late eighteenth century. Whereas Winckelmann had located the significance of Greek art in its outlines as early as 1755, it was the reproduction of Sir William Hamilton's collection of Greek and Etruscan vases which established outline engraving as synonymous with the language of antiquity [Figure 2.53]. This graphic technique became the lingua franca of neoclassicism and the broader impulse to reform the arts through a return to its primitive origins. In the 1790s, through John Flaxman's illustrations for ancient Homeric texts such as the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad,* [Figure 2.54], outline engraving served as the primary vehicle for what Robert Rosenblum called an "art of radically reduced means," which adopted the purity of the line as a return to antiquity.[326]

Outline became essence and there was no difference between original and copy and the essence of antiquity was contained in the purity of the (reproduced) outline. For the romantic German philosopher August Wilhelm Schlegel, Flaxman's illustrations represented the potentiality of art through its incompleteness. In 1799, Schlegel devoted an essay to Flaxman's work in his famed Romantic journal, *Athenaeum* titled "Über Zeichnungen zu Gedichten und

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[326] Robert Rosenblum, *The International Style of 1800 : a Study in Linear Abstraction* (New York: Garland Pub., 1976) 1. Rosenblum uses the expression to describe John Flaxman's work.

John Flaxman's Umrisse." For Schlegel, the outlines found in Flaxman's illustrations for epic

poetry constituted a much more evocative means of conveying the sense of the poetry than what

Schlegel termed *ausgefüllte Zeichnung*, a completed, or "filled-in" drawing. Revisiting the

poetic debate of *ut pictura poesis*,[327] Schlegel wrote that Flaxman's images functioned much like

poems, through intimation and suggestion rather than exposition. "His [Flaxman's] marks

become virtually like hieroglyphs, similar to poets; fantasy is invoked to complete them and

through welcoming incitement that completes itself, instead of a completed painting that

captivates through an obliging fulfillment."[328]

Even if Percier and Fontaine's original intention in using outline engraving was

economic, at the very least Percier's friendship with and deep admiration for Flaxman means that

the architects were aware of outline engraving's aesthetic effects. Such effects that would be

widely copied in decoration books of the period. Thomas Hope, who met Percier through

Flaxman, was largely responsible for the broader transformation of Percier and Fontaine's

economic decision into an aesthetic one. An English connoisseur and correspondent of Percier's,

Hope cited the *Recueil* as a primary influence on his own book, *Household Furniture and

Interior Decoration* (1807) [Figure 2.55]. In the introduction to his own book, Hope sought to

emphasize the commonalities between his own aesthetic and that being crafted by Percier and

Fontaine across the channel. Hope wrote that Percier's touch endowed the plates of the *Recueil*

with an air of spirituality: "Percier...has not only been enabled to invent and to design the most

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[327] A classic source on the debate between poetry and painting established by Horace is Rensselaer Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting." *The Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 1940): 197–269. For the relation of absolutist ideology and the "ut pictura poesis system," see Erica Harth, *Ideology and Culture in Seventeenth-century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[328] Robert Rosenblum, The International Style of 1800, 127-8. On the influence of Flaxman, see Sarah Symmons, *Flaxman and Europe : the Outline Illustrations and Their Influence* (New York: Garland, 1984). Flaxman, John. *John Flaxman, 1755-1826, Master of the Purest Line* (London: Sir John Soane's Musuem and University College London, 2003).

beautiful articles of cabinet-work, and of plate, but has still been able, in many of the etchings

which he himself has made from his compositions of this description, to improve, through the

freedom and the gracefulness of his touch, on the merit of the original drawings; whereas, under

a strange and less skillful hand, the spirit of the originals must have entirely evaporated in the

representation."[329] A preparatory drawing by Percier for plate 61 of the *Recueil* shows the

meticulous level of drawing necessary to creating the engraved plates [Figure 2.56]. The

precision however is mediated by a sense of refinement that became the hallmark of his

drawings. Hope sought to capture the delicacy and precision contained in the engravings of the

Recueil in his own work by employing a team of engravers for the plates of *Household

Furniture*.[330]

Scholars have sought to determine the direction of influence in comparing Hope's furniture

designs with those of Percier and Fontaine.[331] More important is the fact that Hope read outline

engraving as a crucial aesthetic component of the *Recueil* and Percier and Fontaine's decoration

practice. The representations translated and made accessible the architects' ideas in a way that

the material objects produced from them could not. Despite Hope's belief that reforming

peoples' taste in furnishings would lead to the refinement of culture at large, reviewers of his

book considered his interest in furniture as nothing more than the curious hobby of a rich

gentleman. According to his numerous critics, Hope was not entirely successful at transmitting

the same sense of refinement and understanding in his own book that he found in the *Recueil*.

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[329] Thomas Hope, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* (London: T. Bensley for Longman, 1807), 14.

[330] David Watkin, *Thomas Hope 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical Idea* (London: Murray, 1968), 51.

[331] See David Watkin, Philip Hewat-Jaboor, Daniella Ben-Arie, and Elizabeth Angelicoussis eds., *Thomas Hope : Regency Designer* (New Haven: Yale University Press for The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, New York, 2008).

His book met with mixed reviews in England.[332] Flaxman criticized Hope's choice of engraving technique. In an anonymous review of the book, Flaxman wrote that Hope should instead have chosen a different engraving technique, which would have offered readers a more suggestive view of the connoisseur's collection of furnishings, sculpture and artwork.[333] "The richness of effect in the colours, light and shadow, are entirely lost in a publication of mere outlines." Flaxman wished instead that "vignettes had been introduced of shadowed engravings of the same kind with those beautiful designs by Percier in Didot's Horace."[334] Flaxman's suggestion that Hope should have used a different mode of representation indicates how sensitive readers were to the graphic techniques employed in decoration books.

A key permutation of outline engraving took place in France, where its clarity and legibility to readers, whether literate or not gave this engraving technique a political inflection that it did not have elsewhere in Europe. Outline engraving was a perfect union of classical antiquity's contour and the Revolution's ideals of equality and accessibility. Percier and Fontaine were not alone in harnessing the potentials of this reproductive technique. A prospectus inserted into a copy of the *Recueil* advertises a new book by the sculptor Nicolas Beauvallet titled *Fragmens d'architecture, sculpture et peinture dans le style antique* (1804) [Figure 2.57]. Published by François Étienne Joubert, the prospectus advertises the merits of utilizing outline engraving for a collection of decorations inspired by the antique.

In the prospectus, the authors write that several *recueils* have been published advertising the new taste for the antique. Some books however, are rare, voluminous and costly, and are only "destined for the pleasures of the spirit or of luxury, and not at all for facilitating useful

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[332] Watkin, *Thomas Hope,* 214-18.

[333] Watkin, Thomas Hope, 218.

[334] Watkin, *Thomas Hope,* 218.

works." They write that the obscure illustrations found in other books offer "sketches and intentions, and never completed or precise forms," making it difficult to use them as model books. Through their publication, the author and publisher propose to close the gap between the consumers and producers of furnishings and decoration. They ask "if one places before their eyes nothing but indecisive or indecipherable forms, how can one ask that they be rendered with precision, and to give them a grace that is even more seductive than novelty?" Proposing to offer an "encyclopédie artielle" (a neologism for artistic),[335] the authors write that their book will appeal to all sorts of workers, from artists and architects to marble workers, tapestry weavers down to those who paint wallpaper. Foremost, the book will be able to satisfy all audiences through outline engraving: "Outline engraving will respond doubly to the goal of such an enterprise: because it allows for the forms to be perceived more distinctly, and because it places the price of the work in the hands of a greater number of acquirers."[336] Economical reproduction and the Neoclassical purity of the outline were thus not mutually exclusive.

If Flaxman helped expand the language of outline engraving in the European context, it was principally the architect engraver Charles-Pierre-Joseph Normand who established outline engraving in a much broader artistic arena in France. As an engraver Normand remained a key figure in what Erika Naginski has called the "culture of the répétition," the parallel world of reproductive prints that existed alongside original works of art maintaining an aura of authenticity.[337] Like Percier, Normand had shown promise as a young student, being educated at Bachelier's École gratuite de dessin during the 1780s. Normand was in the unfortunate position of winning the grand prix de Rome in 1792. Despite his success, the political turbulence in

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[335] This term was likely coined by Joubert himself, as he uses the same expression in a subsequent publication on print collecting. François Étienne Joubert, *Manuel de l'amateur d'éstampes* (Paris: Joubert, 1821).

[336] Étienne Joubert, Prospectus for *Fragmens d'architecture, sculpture et peinture dans le style antique*, n.d.

[337] Erika Naginski, Book Review, *The Art Bulletin* 85: 1 (Mar. 2003): 196–202.

Rome against the French made it unsafe for any art student to travel there. Normand's foray into engraving, according to his son, arose from the dire circumstances of the architectural market during the Revolution. He published his first book *Nouveau recueil en divers genres d'ornemens* (1803) with the publisher Joubert [Figure 2.58]. "From this moment on, Charles Normand became the promoter, or we could say, the creator of a genre of engraving eminently favorable to the reproduction of works of art which had the form for the essential part."[338] Normand collaborated with the sculptor Beauvallet on the previously mentioned *Fragments d'architecture, sculpture et peinture* and engraved plates for Beunat. He also wrote his own "parallels" of architecture, which modified the compositions he had engraved for Durand's publications.

Indicating a movement away from the enlightenment obsession with genius, Normand's views on architecture emphasized the importance of practice and like Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, training and method. In the introduction to his book on ornaments, Normand writes that the book is intended to help develop the taste and to educate decorators in all genres. Normand writes that interior decoration alone is composed of a variety of parts and forms, which without proper knowledge, are difficult to understand. Rather than providing a definition of all the types of ornament, Normand indicates "in a rapid manner the source and principles [of those ornaments]: to recall and to make it known that all of these objects that seem chimerical and of pure fantasy nonetheless have their origins, their motifs and their models."[339] In contrast to the elevated and somewhat obscure language of Percier and Fontaine's decorating theory, Normand conjures a language of practicality, application and practice. What is decoration, understood

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[338] C. S. *Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de C. P. J. Normand, architecte, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: s.n., n.d)., 7.

[339] Charles Normand, *Nouveau recueil en divers genres d'ornemens et autres objets propres à la décoration* (Paris: Joubert, 1803), 1.

correctly? It is "the application and reasoned combination of [ornaments]."[340] In the introduction,

he indicates that certain patterns can be produced in a variety of different media, including

marble, stucco, or colored in grisaille touched with gold.[341] Unlike the designs in Percier and

Fontaine's book, Normand's decorative compositions were not created for specific clients. His

designs constituted an open pedagogy available to anyone willing to train their eye and hand

based on the examples he offered.

Normand truly democratized the extent of outline engraving. He engraved the plates for

Durand's *Parallèle* and his lessons on architecture. And Percier and Fontaine entrusted their

works with Normand, whose son recalled that busy with other projects, the two architects

entrusted their book of Italian architecture (probably *Choix des plus célèbres maisons de*

plaisance) to Normand. According to his son, the architects chose Normand in order to

"interpret their thoughts, or in other words, to translate and bring to light the materials, sketched

hastily and which remained for them as memories, with which they proposed to finish their

work."[342]

In its final migration to architectural publications, outline engraving became associated

with objectivity and a structural rationalism. It became a means of articulating a modular

technique of architectural design emerging from the École polytechnique, the newly founded

engineering school where Durand was in charge of the architecture courses. The graphic

technique served as the foundation of Durand's methods of architectural composition. His

pedagogical method depended upon the clear articulation of the plan, elevation and section

through the delineation of horizontal and vertical axes [Figure 2.59]. Normand's engravings

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[340] Normand, *Nouveau recueil*, 1.

[341] Normand, *Nouveau recueil*, 7.

[342] "Notice sur Normand," 7.

may have translated Percier and Fontaine's unarticulated ideas. In the case of his work for

Durand, Normand transcribed an entire way of thinking about architecture that rested upon what

Jacques Guillerme has called the "purity of the trace," a visual system that transmitted the new

technical imagination emerging from the engineering school onto the surface of the page.

Guillerme argues that the modular system of architectural design is "inseparable from the

advent of a technological rationality in architectural production." What was essentially a "crisis

in the figuration of technical projects" resulted in the consideration of regularity as a form of

beauty itself.[343] Linear abstraction became the primary means of transcribing this method of

thinking onto the page. And Normand's engravings helped to abolish "the giving way to the

illusionistic figurations belonging to a baroque inspiration."[344] As Guillerme notes, the rhetoric

of linear abstraction created by Normand in Durand's architectural primer engendered and

reinforced Durand's own emphasis on an economy of design materials and means in the actual

construction of buildings.

The *Recueil* both participates in and rejects this epistemic shift towards the rational

modularization of space. On the one hand, the *Recueil*'s plates would have been legible to

architectural students. The furniture designs for tables, *secrétaires* (large desks), candelabrum,

and *psyché* are depicted in the representational grammar of elevation, section and plan, with

measurements both in *pieds* and the newly established metric system. Utilizing these rational

methods of composition endows the decorative objects with a monumental quality, as if they are

buildings themselves. On the other hand, what Guillerme called a "Baroque" sense of

illusionistic space haunts the plates of the *Recuei*l, with several cahiers opening with a

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[343] Jacques Guillerme, "Notes Pour L'histoire De La Regularité." *Revue d'Esthétique* XXIII, no. 3–4 (1970): 383–394.

[344] Guillerme, "Notes," 389.

perspectival interior. And of course, as the title page indicates, the architects sold colored copies of the *Recueil*. Although few colored copies exist, this hypothetical sense of color would have provided an altogether different image of the architectural interior than Durand's black and white geometrical structures. The sensuality of color and the illusionism of the perspectival view confound any attempt at a purely grid-like space.

Something strange happens when the simple outlines used by Flaxman to create a frieze-like effect read across the picture plane are repurposed in the perspectival views of the *Recueil*'s interiors. Perhaps the first of their kind, these interior views have a picturesque quality, borrowing from Baroque *vedute* and the scenographic techniques of the theater, used to create sprawling vistas of urban scenes or splendidly decaying ruins. The ambiguous effects conjured by the *Recueil*'s outline perspectival views of the interior would have been condemned by Durand because they created an ersatz visual experience on the page that worked against the rational qualities of the architectural drawing. The sequence of each cahier creates a kind of effect of walking through interior space, as if this internalized space and the objects contained within are enough to describe fully the character of the site and patron. And yet, unlike the infinite extension created by the masterful perspectival views for the theater by the Bibiena family and the architect Servandoni,[345] the perspectival views of the *Recueil* are self-enclosed, contained, and sealed as if they are trying to extricate themselves from any particular context or locational specificity.

These interior perspectives are only one aspect that differentiates the *Recueil* from earlier decoration books. Unlike the interiors published by the Scottish architects Robert and James Adam, the plates of the *Recueil* picture an architecture of the interior cut off from a larger

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[345] On the scenographic techniques employed by the Bibiena family and Servandoni's Salle des machines at the Tuileries, see Louise Pelletier, *Architecture in Words*.

exterior reality. Like Percier and Fontaine, the Adam brothers were known for their classically inspired interiors, which they published in *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (1773-9). The Adam brothers too undertook renovation and decoration projects that changed only the interior of buildings. Moreover, Robin Evans has argued that the brothers relied upon a technique of architectural representation that emphasized the isolated nature of their interior decorations which Evans termed the "developed surface interior." Emerging in the middle part of the eighteenth century, the developed surface interior allowed for the interior of a building to be described in detail by placing the plan of a room in the middle of four elevations, which extend off of the plan as if they could be folded up to form a box.[346] [Figure 2.60] Evans argues that the Adam brothers' reliance on this mode of representation, allowed them to bring a sense of variety to the highly regular Neoclassical plan. Representing a self-enclosed space allowed the architects to think of each room as a self-contained unit, or as Evans describes it, an "enveloping inner surface."[347] Evans' reading of the Adam brothers' representational techniques is selective. For the Adams brothers' book includes plans and facade elevations that guide the reader through a spatial sequence and places the rooms within a larger architectural framework [Figure 2.61]. By contrast, Percier and Fontaine's book does not show a sequence of rooms from the same location or for the same patron. Furthermore, it is difficult to locate the *Recueil*'s interiors within specific architectural frameworks, buildings, or cities. Patrons, save for the Emperor, remain but a series of initials and places.

Conclusion: Rereading the *Recueil*

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[346] Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), 202.

[347] Evans, *Translations,* 209.

Two contradictory impulses operate in the *Recueil*. The architects seek to maintain the principles of good taste rooted in antiquity and upheld by architecture. The impulse behind outline engraving was to endow contingent, unstable forms with an eternal presence. However, the architects also acknowledge that the interior is not free from the powers of fashion and its ability to change the tastes of society. Such contradictions appear minor compared to the most apparent paradox of the *Recueil*: that a decoration book recognized by scholars as the creator of the Empire style contains no mention of Napoleon or the empire in the preliminary discourse. This is surprising considering the nature of the final installments of Percier and Fontaine's book. Was there a sense that already in 1812, the year of Napoleon's disastrous campaign into Russia, the end of empire was near?

Within the representational language of the *Recueil,* a subtle yet crucial transformation takes place. In contrast to the progression toward an aesthetic *tabula rasa* that Rosenblum linked to John Flaxman's increasingly abstract illustrations, the engraved lines of the *Recueil* become more intricate and sophisticated, offering views into the newly converted sites of Napoleon's power. The plates depicting the architects' work for the newly crowned *Empereur des Français* evoke the imperial court's adoption of a luxury and splendor that sought to outdo the pageantry of the *ancien regime,* from the extravagant soup tureen for Josephine executed by the goldsmith Guillaume Martin Biennais to the emperor's throne in the Tuileries Palace [Figure 2.62]. Outline engraving's "art of radically reduced means" is instead forced to describe in increasing detail the variety of textures, surfaces and contours incorporated into Percier and Fontaine's imperial designs.

While not chronological, there is an ordering process that takes place in the final installments of the *Recueil*. Sprinkled throughout the later plates are the architects' commissioned projects for the emperor and empress. No longer catering to a variety of clients, the final plates gravitate towards the highest echelons of power. The penultimate cahier focuses on King Charles IV's cabinet, shipped to Aranjuez, a project that will be discussed at the end of this dissertation. The final six plates of the *Recueil* are solely devoted to Percier and Fontaine's work for Napoleon.

Percier and Fontaine's training in Rome during their youth has finally been put in the service of a higher power, allowing them to create a new language of symbols on par with the ancient Roman empire, such as the arc du carrousel (1806-8), a miniaturized triumphal arch modeled on the arch of Constantine in Rome. Percier and Fontaine of course sought to capitalize on their newfound fame as Napoleon's official architects, financing the publication of a book on the *Sacre* and crowning of the emperor [Figure 2.63]. Part of a speculative venture which publicized their decorations for the coronation ceremony at Notre Dame and the distribution of the eagles at the École Militaire in December 1804, the book was not actually completed until 1822, a year after Napoleon's death.[348] Percier and Fontaine's actual decorations for the ceremony were created in a timelier manner. Conceived in a matter of months, their program for embellishing the church and military school, as well as arranging the pageantry along the way responded to Napoleon's demands to create a spectacle worthy of emulation by a public

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[348] Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and Jean-Baptiste Isabey, *Le Sacre De S. M. l'Empereur Napoléon Dans L'eglise Métropolitaine De Paris Le XI Frimaire an XIII, Dimanche 2 Décembre 1804* (A Paris: De l'Imprimerie impériale, 1822). Although they had initially planned on publishing the text to mark Napoleon's coronation ceremony (without initially consulting him), the work of the engravers delayed the publication of the book. Considering it a lost cause, the architects and painter did not consider reprinting it until after his death. On the Sacre as a speculative project for Percier and Fontaine, see Garric, *Recueils d'italie*, 104.

surprised by the overnight appearance of an *Empereur des Français*.[349] In the publication, the

miniaturist Jean-Baptiste Isabey was responsible for depicting the figures and the costumes,

which he had designed for the ceremony. Fontaine again took charge of the perspectival views

while Percier created the ornate frames and medallions. Like the Horace vignettes, these frames

were key to understanding the role of the principle characters in the ceremony. The coordinated

system of decorated frames and medallions fixed the particular rank and position of each

participant in the coronation ceremony. The frames served to embellish the position of specific

individuals, like Josephine, who had transformed from citizen to empress overnight [Figure

2.64]. Instead of a structure of delimitation, the frames and lower vignettes magnify Isabey's

portraits, translating the magnificence of the costumes into an eloquent grammar of ornament.

As the proofs for the publication demonstrate, the diminutive portraits could not convey the same

sense of regal authority and stature without the frames [Figure 2.65].

The language of imperial decoration carries over to the final plates of the *Recueil*. The

explanatory text must further the work of description, detailing gilded chairs, violet and crimson

velour, and the entire surfaces of rooms and objects embroidered with golden insignias. In

reading the text alongside the image, we are made aware of decoration's central place in the

unstable edifice of Napoleonic ideology, an ideology that increasingly relied on a profusion of

ornaments, decorations, gilding and embroidered costumes in order to summon the presence of

the emperor everywhere in a language that would brook no visual opposition or threat to imperial

power. The later plates of the *Recueil* search for a vacant space or surface or site of signification

for Napoleon, as he seeks to make a political ideology of his own, divorced from both the

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[349] Fontaine mentions the emperor's plans for a coronation ceremony on August 20, 1804. The crowning took place December 2, 1804. Fontaine, *Journal*, I, 84-5.

Revolution and Monarchy. What Blondel called the most interesting part of architecture has become, at long last, the most politically useful.

Plate 66 shows that it is history, not antiquity, that rises to the surface and orders the later part of the *Recueil* [Figure 2.66]. In contrast to the common understanding of the *Recueil* as upholding antiquity as its sole model, Percier and Fontaine's work for the emperor in fact drew from multiple historical sources. The image depicts the large chimney that was the centerpiece of the grand cabinet at the Tuileries palace, which the architects transformed into Napoleon's primary official residence in Paris.[350] They indicate that the inspiration for their decorative ensemble came from the original moldings, wainscoting and the supports found in the interior, which had been designed during the regency of Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV.[351] It is difficult to determine where the surrounding wall ends and the actual chimney begins, since a continuous band of molding fuses the elements together. Paired Corinthian pilasters placed to either side of the chimney suggest a design that hews closely to the wall, as if the architects sought to imperceptibly graft their design onto the *Régence*-period room. Napoleonic symbols are scattered about, in the eagles perched upon the capitals of the pilasters and Napoleon's initial interlaced with laurel crowns marking one of several friezes in the upper register of the chimneypiece. In the midst of this ensemble is a large bas-relief showing "History, who writes under the dictates of Victory," supported by a pedestal containing Napoleon's initial and his arms. Napoleon's royal insignia—the hand of justice and the imperial scepter—have been placed to either side of the bas-relief. In the central figurative group, history stands to the left, writing upon a blank slab. Victory offers her a palm while grasping tightly to a wreath in her

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[350] C. Ledoux and G. Lebard, "La décoration et l'ameublement du Grand Cabinet de Napoléon Ier aux Tuileries." *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* 192 (1941).

[351] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, Plate 66.

other hand. The chimneypiece is intended as a bombastic piece of Napoleonic propaganda. History is to write only what Victory tells her to and not about the losses, violence or devastation of war. The most curious aspect of the piece is the clock that takes the shape of a zodiac, located in the center of the bas-relief. While history may be trying to listen intently to what victory tells her in order to pen a grand narrative, an alternate form of time is erupting and transforming the permanence of her words into nothing more than the vagaries of chance.

Percier and Fontaine's receptivity to the more recent historical forms of architecture that they found at the Tuileries palace and the Louvre symbolically recuperates the destruction of monuments they were forced to undertake during the revolution. In the midst of their official work for Napoleon, Percier and Fontaine produce an alternative vision of history that is much more porous and accommodating than the purism of Greek antiquity that had been established by Julien David Le Roy. The compositional arrangement of decorative forms in space found in the *Recueil* does not depend on artistic license alone. They are a form of historical reasoning, an attempt to explain visually how to place Napoleon within a historical constellation of previous rulers. This is most evident in the final cahier, which details their work at the newly founded Musée Napoléon at the Louvre. The architects are at pains to come up with ways to both preserve traces of the original building and fuse them with their own designs, while also creating a space to display the antiquities and art objects acquired through war. The obscure perspectival view offered in plate 67 gives a sense of drama to looking into the salle de Vénus at the Louvre [Figure 2.67]. It also gives an ideal vantage point from which to see how ornament, architectural form and sculptural objects have been fused into a harmonious whole. The viewer's attention is fragmented, bounding off of the sculptural figures, guided back into space by the extension of the columns into depth, only to be drawn upward to the heavily ornamented ceiling and vaults,

which compete for attention with the classical forms below. If one wishes to understand how the beautiful artifacts of antiquity managed to arrive at the Louvre, one only needed to turn up to the vaults and read a narrative of Napoleonic conquest, with the victors carting off the conquests of war.

The sheer exuberance of the seventy-second and final plate of the *Recueil* is worth describing in detail [Figure 2.68]. The plate features a chimney in the river room of the musée Napoleon, which was to be placed at the end of the same room where the sculptor Jean Goujon's famed caryatids were located. On the chimney, a bust of Napoleon crowned with laurels is surrounded by scales that fan outwards in a lunette shape, contained by a heavy garland of fruit. The bust is protected by the open wings of an eagle, which is in turn surrounded by trophy groups comprised of helmets, scabbards and shields, densely packed on either side of the eagle. Two full-length figures, one male and one female, rest an arm on either side of the central panel, which contains a Napoleonic emblem, complete with the hand of justice and the imperial scepter. Below, the fireplace cover has the initials of Henri II and his motto, which are in turn surrounded by two pilasters with the initials of Napoleon threaded through decorative motifs. In the explanation of the plate, the architects indicate that the two statues were originally by Goujon. However, "changes in construction had occasioned the displacement of these beautiful works." The architects felt that since the Louvre had been changed into a room for displaying antique sculptures, they had wanted to reestablish "as much as possible, things in their primitive state, and to recall in the decoration of the chimney, as in all other parts, the taste of the arts in the time of Henri II."[352] Percier and Fontaine's redecoration campaigns for Napoleon ultimately did not rely on complete effacement. Instead, their designs depended upon a careful process of layering,

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[352] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, Explanation, plate 72.

accumulation and juxtaposition, which allowed for the symbols of the past to show alongside interventions of the present. What more fitting place to end the *Recueil* than in the universal museum, which would become the site of pure spectacle, where history would be placed on display and where architecture could do nothing more than serve as unobserved support.

In the final plate of the *Recueil*, the properly architectural framework for decoration that Percier and Fontaine sought to reassert in their preliminary discourse disappears altogether in the swelling profusion of fruit, trophies, figures and strapwork. As plates become more complex in their decorative language, the lasting impression of the *Recueil* is a dizzying effect of spatial and temporal collapse. The historical and site specificity of Percier and Fontaine's clients gives way to the profusion of decoration and the visual effect of the reproductions, as the engraver's burin must cut ever more intricate furrows in order to trace the decorative line of the architects' drawings. The mirrors strategically placed in a number of the interiors intended to extend the cramped space of boudoirs and living rooms, distort surface and structure, creating a solipsistic space where everything is rendered impossibly visible in a dazzling one-dimensionality to the viewer, who is neither architect, craftsman or emperor, but the desiring consumer.

Chapter 3
Decorating Campaigns

In the previous chapter, we witnessed how Percier and Fontaine articulated a new vision

of the interior in their publication, the *Recueil de décorations intérieures*. Drawing from their

experiences as stage decorators during the revolution, Percier and Fontaine transformed the

interior and its decoration from a site reflecting a patron's personal taste into a conceptual site for

refashioning the public identity of the subject. In this chapter, I will discuss Percier and

Fontaine's work at Malmaison, the first properly architectural commission that the partners

undertook for Napoleon, in order to explore the problem of architectural patronage in the post-

revolutionary period. In 1799, Napoleon and his wife Josephine asked Percier and Fontaine to

restore Malmaison, an estate just outside of Paris that was to serve as a weekend country house

for the general. However, the rapidly changing political circumstances of the First Consul forced

the architects to relinquish their plans for the construction of a well-ordered pastoral retreat.

Percier and Fontaine sought out alternative sources and models that could be rapidly harnessed to

the emerging shape of Napoleonic power. It was at Malmaison that the tent would be come a

definitive element of Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration projects. Moreover, this

undertheorized architectural type would inadvertently operate as the very cipher of modern

imperial ideology.

Rather than providing a systematic account of Malmaison's history, which the

scholarship of Bernard Chevallier has admirably achieved, I undertake a selective reading of

Percier and Fontaine's interventions at the country estate[353]. There are three central themes that

are explored in this chapter: Percier and Fontaine's relationship to Napoleon; Napoleon's

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[353] Bernard Chevallier, *Malmaison: Château Et Domaine Des Origines à 1904* (Paris: éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989).

problematic role as an architectural patron; and the broader cultural forces operating in architecture that ultimately transformed the building culture of the period. Malmaison represents Percier and Fontaine's first engagement with Napoleon, and the problem of how exactly to represent a political leader who was neither an absolute monarch nor a democratically elected official. Their surprising adoption of the tent as a predominant motif of Malmaison indicates that in the wake of the revolution, the monumental language of architecture in which Percier and Fontaine had been trained in as students could not function to properly represent Napoleon's ambiguous political and social status. The architects turned to interior decoration as a rapid means of processing and naturalizing the recent military conquests of Napoleon that launched him from an unknown general to the emperor of the French. At Malmaison, Percier and Fontaine's tent designs participated in the Napoleonic regime's reliance on a "reality effect" emanating from the documentary-style paintings of battle scenes commissioned by Denon and the army bulletin texts that described far-off conflicts in minute detail for anxious readers back home.[354] Under the direction of Napoleon, France and her destiny ultimately depended on war's ontic reality, that it signaled a conflict until the complete destruction of the enemy.[355]

Architectural historians have traditionally viewed the *Palais du roi de Rome*, a sprawling complex to be built on the outskirts of Paris for Napoleon's son by his second wife Marie-Louise, as truly emblematic of the triumphal sovereign architecture that Percier and Fontaine

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[354] For an analysis of how the literary techniques employed in the army bulletins affected the aesthetics of the period, see Michael Marrinan, "Literal/Literary/'Lexie': History, Text and Authority in Napoleonic Painting," *Word & Image* 7, no. 3 (Jul.-Sept.1991): 177-200. See also Norman Bryson, "Representing the Real: Gros' Painting of Napoleon," *History of the Human Sciences* 1 (May 1988): 75-104.

[355] For Napoleon and the notion of total war, see David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007). and also Jean-Yves Guiomar, *L'invention De La Guerre Totale : XVIIIe-XXe Siècle*. (Paris: Félin, 2004).

envisioned for modern imperial France.[356] [Figure 3.1] The palace was featured prominently in

Percier and Fontaine's last co-authored publication, *Résidences de souverains, parallèle entre*

plusieurs résidences de souverains de France, d'Allemagne, de Suède, de Russie, d'Espagne, et

d'Italie.[357] A two-volume book issued in 1833, *Résidences de souverains* comprised a historical

text and a large-scale atlas of plans and maps of royal residences rendered in the same scale, a

mode of visual comparison that Le Roy and Durand had earlier adopted in their comparative

approaches to architectural history. Dedicated posthumously to Napoleon, the text interweaves

personal narratives written by Fontaine, anecdotes about his direct dealings with Napoleon, and

short historical descriptions of the palatial buildings across Europe, which had been made

accessible to them by the emperor. Yet unlike Durand and Le Roy's "parallel" books comparing

the ancient architecture of different cultures, the *Résidences de souverains* turns its gaze away

from antiquity to recent history. The texts accompanying each of the plans discuss the historical

origins of each building in a chronological manner, inserting the moment of Percier and

Fontaine's intervention last. In contrast to Durand's work, which visualized building types as

static structures only capable of articulating a specific historical period, Percier and Fontaine

discuss royal residences within the fabric of history. They describe buildings that are subject to

the changing tastes and multiple alterations undertaken by a succession of owners with different

political agendas.

    While *Résidences de souverains* may outwardly celebrate the territorial conquests of the

Napoleonic regime, its subtext is the lost possibility of a sovereign, monumental architecture.

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[356] Hans-Joachim Haassengier, *Das Palais du Roi de Rome auf dem Hügel von Chaillot : Percier--Fontaine--Napoléon* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, c1983).

[357] Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains : Parellèle entre plusieurs résidences de souverains de France, d'Allemagne, de Suède, de Russie, d'Espagne, et d'Italie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1973 [Reprint]).

The idealized plans present projects by the architects that had not been completed, with the exception of the Palais Royal, which Fontaine had designed for Louis-Philippe. The authors write that the initial idea for publishing their book came in 1815, following the final defeat of Napoleon during the Hundred Days. The Prussian Prince Friedrich Wilhelm paid Fontaine a visit, asking to see the fabled plans for the Palais du roi de Rome.[358] Intended for the future king of Rome, Napoleon's son with his second wife Marie-Louise, the palace was to have been constructed in Paris on the Chaillot hill, where the Trocadéro is located today. It formed Percier and Fontaine's total vision for a palatial architecture and contrasted starkly with the minor renovations and restorations that Napoleon constantly demanded that the architects undertake, in order to make former Bourbon residences habitable following their pillaging and neglect during the revolution. The architects purchased vast tracts of land in the name of the emperor in order to clear a space large enough for the palace. Organized according to a central axial symmetry, the palace's monumental facade was to have looked out over the Seine River. In the initial design conceived by the architects during the months leading to the birth of Napoleon's son, [Figure 3.2] the courtyard included a circus structure reminiscent of Percier and Fontaine's revolutionary-period project for a theater, framed by a colonnade reminiscent of Bernini's plaza for St. Peters in Rome. Well-trimmed gardens, ebullient fountains and a cascading set of stairs leading down to the river would have rivaled the grandiose villa estates built by powerful Italian popes that the architects had seen in their youth. Across from the new imperial residence and joined by a monumental bridge, Percier and Fontaine envisioned a vast and intricate network of imperial institutions that would have included an archive, military parade grounds, a university

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[358] See Jean-Philippe Garric, "L'ambition d'une dynastie: Le palais du roi de Rome," in *Enfance impériale : Le roi de Rome, fils de Napoléon*, Christophe Beyeler, and Vincent Cochet, eds. (Dijon: Faton, 2011), 63-9.

campus, and a city of the arts, an urban vision that would have brought the bureaucracy, the military, and centers of learning all under the gaze of Napoleon. [Figure 3.3]

The grandiose plans for the Palais du roi de Rome were never realized. Even during his reign, the emperor repeatedly asked that the project be scaled back [3.4]. Returning to Paris after the disastrous defeat in Moscow in the winter of 1812, Napoleon requested that Fontaine (no longer working with Percier), build nothing more than a modest retreat for a convalescent. The Palais du roi de Rome, the visualization of Napoleon's dynastic ambitions and Percier and Fontaine's architectural dreams, came to resemble nothing grander than the first project that the architects had envisioned for the general at Malmaison.

From the Royal Body to the Napoleonic Wardrobe

Before I delve into Percier and Fontaine's project at Malmaison, it is important to underscore just how fundamentally the events of the French Revolution had transformed architecture as an unquestioned signifier of power. The foundations of French classical architecture in the seventeenth century were inscribed within a representational system structured around absolutism. The relationship between the consolidation of monarchical power and architecture was untroubled. For an architect like François Blondel, architecture was the natural result of military conquest and the principal function of monuments was to celebrate and glorify a ruler's victories.

No monument better underscores architecture's privileged role in the representation of absolute power during the seventeenth century than the palace of Versailles, built and expanded by the famed sun king, Louis XIV during the 17th and early 18th centuries [Figure 3.5].

Philosopher Louis Marin writes that Versailles formed an extension of Louis XIV's far-reaching might: "the castle and the gardens of Versailles, 'architect' the Prince to make him not only the absolute political power, but the center of the cosmos in its entirety."[359] According to Marin, absolutism depends on a system of representation, which seamlessly crosses the threshold of the symbolic and the real. What makes Versailles the privileged sign of Louis XIV is its monumental quality, the fact that it legitimately founds "the presence of the present by giving its symbolic dimension, by inscribing it under the regime of the sovereign and of the law."[360] The presence of the king is carefully articulated in every aspect of the sprawling complex, from its overall layout and plan to the individual rooms that make up its entirety. The body of the king, whose presence is inscribed in his royal apartment, is placed on the axis that extends and orders the carefully landscaped gardens beyond the main building. Both the inside and outside of the palace are subjected to the single point perspective of the monarch. A rigid geometry of roads shoot out from the palace, ordering the geographic space into infinite extension. Versailles is the manifestation of what Marin called "force's tendency toward absolutism, and the desire for the absolute."[361]

Calling Versailles "a deformed midget whose gigantesque members, even more deformed, increased its ugliness," Percier and Fontaine associated the palace with the rotting corpse of the monarchy [Figure 3.6]. In *Résidences de souverains*, the architects saw Versailles as a prefiguration of the monarchy's degeneration and downfall. Instead of a centrifugal universe emanating from Louis XIV's body, Versailles reflected his grandson's weaknesses for vice and sensual pleasure, creating "the need for little mysterious apartments, the usage of secret

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Louis Marin, "Classical, Baroque: Versailles, or the Architecture of the Prince," *Yale French Studies*, no. 80 (January 1, 1991): 168.

[360]Marin, "Classical, Baroque,"178.

[361] Marin, "Classical, Baroque," 180.

boudoirs, hidden staircases and tortuous corridors." Reiterating the condemnation of Rococo

forms found in the *Recueil*, Percier and Fontaine write that in order to accommodate the "esprits

déreglés" of the period, it was required that Versailles "give rounded contours to all forms, to

proscribe straight lines, to invent according to fancy, without recognizable principles, fantastic

ornaments."[362] For Percier and Fontaine, decoration loses its force of meaning once it becomes

unmoored from its architectural framework and its legible social or political message. The

architects recalled that Napoleon, after touring the grounds of the palace, asked why the

revolution had not managed to destroy such an awful building.[363]

Percier and Fontaine did not wish to adopt the deteriorating representational system of

absolutism found at Versailles for Napoleon. This chapter contends furthermore that Percier and

Fontaine sensed that instead of absolutism's concentration in monumental structures, Napoleonic

representation depended upon the dispersal and multiplication of his image in a variety of

objects, texts and images, in the belief that such a widely disseminated power could never be

destroyed.[364] [Figure 3.7] Napoleon questioned architecture's commemorative significance, given

its costly nature and the extensive amount of time required to complete projects. In *Résidences*

de souverains, Fontaine recalled that Napoleon had once declared architecture the ruin of

sovereigns. Napoleon's ambivalence to architecture reflects the destruction of monuments by

revolutionary committees, in which as we have seen, Percier was an active member, in order to

destroy the traces of monarchial power. Eradicating royal monuments signaled that to be

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[362] Percier and Fontaine, *Résidences*, 117.

[363] Percier and Fontaine, Résidences, 118.
[364] Annie Jourdan, *Napoléon: Héros, Imperator, Mécène* (Paris: Aubier, 1998}.

materially represented in a statue or a building also provided the public with the means to contest the monarchy's power by committing acts of violence upon these symbolic objects.[365]

Beyond this fear of symbolic retribution upon a singular image, Napoleon also saw the grandeur of architectural monuments at odds with a modern lifestyle that demanded comfort and utility. In an anecdote from 1807 recalled by Fontaine, Napoleon criticized the palaces he had seen, saying Sans-Souci was in bad taste, while the grand palaces of Germany were "outdated, ugly and boring." The passage is worth quoting at length, for it demonstrates a vision of architectural patronage that sought to escape the extravagances of Baroque absolutist planning:

> A house, no matter what, is a form of clothing that must be made
> to measure and according to the needs for whom it is destined. I
> know that it is more difficult to build a house for a head of state
> than for any other person, and that, as you [Fontaine] have often
> repeated, majesty and convenience often being at odds with each
> other, it is often at the expense of the beauty of proportions that
> one seeks to obtain the small subdivisions that the particular
> conveniences [convenances] of a prince's residence requires. But
> nevertheless, I must believe that art can find in its resources the
> means to lift these difficulties; I want to be housed in a dignified
> manner but I will not be like most of the sovereigns, a prisoner and
> ill at ease under the gilded ceilings of my house; for me, there must
> be, in the same place, under the same facade, two distinct things:
> first, the complete lodgings of the head of a rich family, with all
> the conveniences of a private man who wants his comforts and
> freedom; and then the reception and ceremonial room of a
> representative of a great nation, to whom one owes honor and
> respect.[366]

The text conjures the notion of architecture as a form of clothing that is subordinate to the person it clings to rather than actively constructing that identity.[367] It is "made-to-measure."

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[365] On revolutionary iconoclasm, the rhetoric of destruction and Enlightenment theories of materialism, see Erika Naginski, "The Object of Contempt." *Yale French Studies*, no. 101 (January 1, 2001): 32–53.

[366] Percier and Fontaine, *Résidences*, 107-8.

[367] For a notion of clothing as constitutive of subjectivity, see Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones eds., *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Furthermore, in the narrative, Napoleon tells Fontaine that he does not want to be like other

sovereigns, "a prisoner and ill at ease under the gilded ceilings of my house." Instead, he requires

all of his residences to have two distinct areas: a home where he can remain in private and at

ease, out of the eye of the public, and a second reception room, "representative of a great nation,

to whom one owes honor and respect."

Although anecdotal, the statement recalled by Fontaine nonetheless points to a different

conception of a sovereign's residence based upon changing structures of power. Ancien regime

residential palaces had often had separate apartments for the "ordinary" affairs of the king and

queen and the proper representation rooms. These *petits appartements*, the more intimate rooms,

were often connected to the official realms of a palace through staircases that remained hidden

behind walls and invisible to official visitors. Rather than seen as opposites, these two

architectural articulations of monarchical power spatially articulated the notion of the king's two

bodies.[368] In the case of Louis XIV, power was rooted in the King's two bodies, one that was

temporal and the other eternal. Even though individual kings would die, the institutional

function of the king would live on. By contrast, magnificence is antagonistic to the comforts and

freedoms of an ordinary life for Napoleon. Ancien régime architecture too had relied upon an

analogy of the ideal body in order to produce and codify a theoretical discourse centered on the

orders. As Werner Szambien has demonstrated, architects seeking to define the principle of

symmetry often relied upon corporeal metaphors. Architects during the seventeenth century

described the wings and principal blocks of buildings as *bras* (arms) and *corps* (bodies) which

imitated the symmetrical organization of the human body. The corporeal metaphor of the king's

body became dismantled with the French revolution. Percier and Fontaine overturned such

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[368] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies : a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997)

bodily metaphors in their description of Versailles as a "deformed midget with gigantesque members."[369] In short, the revolution's ideals of equality could not be represented in an abstract eternal body, but in specific individuals and events. The ideal nude body upon which a classical artistic vocabulary was mapped gave way to depictions of clothed individual heroes of the revolutionary events.[370]

For Napoleon, power had to be channeled in a process of horizontal dispersion so that it did not appear to be concentrated in absolutist terms, but rather as a reflection and representation of a fraternity of equal citizens. Napoleon wielded his true power from the visual dissemination of his "ordinary life," evidenced by his masterful staging of his costume of the bicorne hat and the redingote. As Margaret Waller has argued in her examination of Napoleon's dress and notions of masculinity, Napoleon's adopted the humble costume of a colonel in the light infantry or a foot grenadier in the Imperial guard in order to stand out more amongst the highly costumed men in his court.[371] In a drawing of Napoleon Bonaparte by Jean-Baptiste Isabey, the Corsican general is shown wearing his famed bicorne hat, with his hand placed inside his waistcoat [Figure 3.8]. Isabey has portrayed the general wearing the uniform of an imperial foot grenadier through a drawing rendered *à la maniere noire*, a new technique that the artist developed in order to imitate the depth and texture of English mezzotints.[372] The rapidity with which this drawing technique, which relied on the crayons newly invented by Conté, could be executed allowed for

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[369] Werner Szambien, *Symétrie, goût, caractère : Théorie et terminologie de l'architecture à l'âge classique 1550-1800 / Werner Szambien.* Paris: : Picard, 1986), especially the section on symmetry, 61-78. I do not have the space to go into a full discussion of the usage of corporeal metaphor in architecture. However, as Szambien notes, the body underwent a transformation in architectural texts towards the end of the eighteenth century, as sensorialist philosophies dissolved the structural essence of the body into a series of mechanisms and motions.

[371] Margaret Waller, "The Emperor's New Clothes," in Todd Reeser and Lewis Carl Seifert, eds., *Entre Hommes : French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 115-142.

[372] Tony Halliday. "Academic Outsiders at the Paris Salons of the Revolution: The Case of Drawings 'à La Manière Noire'," *Oxford Art Journal* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 1998): 71-86.

Isabey to capture Napoleon in mid-motion, despite his hatred for posing for any kind of portrait. Rather than depicting the general in a moment of triumph at the San Bernardino Pass or at the bridge of Arcole, Napoleon is shown in a moment of tense repose, promenading the grounds of his small country estate Malmaison, before his political destiny as emperor had been completely secured.

Napoleon's active staging of sartorial contrast and deception (power resides in the simplest, not most extravagantly dressed person) formed one element in a broader system of political stagecraft which sought sources of legitimation and power wherever they could be shored up. Susan Siegfried has argued in her perceptive analysis of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' painting of *Napoleon on his Throne* (1806) [Figure 3.9] that the painter's attempts to capture all of the material effects of Napoleon's royal costume, from his ermine cape and gold embroidery to the carpet featuring the imperial eagle and the carved throne, signaled more than a return to a primitive style that rejected the Neoclassical ideals of painting.[373] His attention to surface details reflected a larger shift in the symbolics of power, as the force of signification migrated from the body to the objects and trappings of imperial status. As contemporary commentators noted while observing Ingres' painting, Napoleon's body had been rendered in a strange, doll-like inhuman way, with his body swallowed by the costume enveloping him. Napoleon's cultural advisors, led by Dominique Vivant-Denon, combed through history in order to cobble together a narrative of legitimation for the founding of the new French empire. Relics of the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne and King Dagobert were "unearthed" (but more likely planted) and read as signs announcing Napoleon as the rightful heir to ancient non-Bourbon

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[373] Susan Siegfried, "Ingres's Napoleon I on His Throne: The Painting," Chapter 2 in *Staging Empire: Napoleon, Ingres, and David* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University, 2006), 25-60.

dynasties. Such artifacts became part of an increasingly irrational and superstitious worship of

historic fetishes that "proved" the political destiny of Napoleon.[374] The Napoleonic propaganda

machine's staging and worship of material objects forms the prehistory to Marx's analysis of

commodity fetishism, capitalism's ability to reify objects as if they themselves were living

things, in turn replacing the laborers who had produced such objects. And indeed, to each of

Napoleon's political tactics—the costume changes, the planted historical talismans, and the

interior decorations—corresponded broader social forces he was incapable of controlling,

namely the powers of commerce and capitalism.

Percier and Fontaine's redecoration project at Malmaison gains greater significance when

read within the broader cultural and social transformations overtaking Napoleonic France. It is

in this context that the tent motif used throughout Malmaison becomes especially significant. A

temporary structure typically associated with momentary festival structures or picturesque forms

for the garden, the tent represents a mobile, itinerant power at odds with the stationary,

monumental structures that were understood as architecture's proper domain. Percier and

Fontaine chose the tent as a decorative motif for the reason that it could be assembled quickly.

Their subsequent decision to publicize their work at Malmaison in the *Recueil de décorations

intérieures* indicates that they sought to codify these individual commissions into a theory of

decoration.

The pages of the *Recueil* enabled the architects to broadcast their own work and

simultaneously articulate new forms of Napoleonic representation. Unlike Le Roy, Percier and

Fontaine's theory of interior decoration did not rely upon a genealogical search for architecture's

ancient origins or its ideal models. What mattered was the correct application of a decorative

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[374] Siegfried, "Ingres' Napoleon," 30.

program within an interior in order to get the force of the message across. Thus, it was not the recognizability of the tent's visual precedent in the past that was important. Instead, their interior decorations undertook a process of naturalization that allowed for what might be called a modern "sovereign style" to accrue legitimacy.

However, the tent was not a closed symbol. Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration book acknowledged fashion as an external influence threatening the proper principles of architecture, and the tent's emergence in a Napoleonic visual ideology simultaneously pointed to the operation of forces whose multiple meanings were outside of the regime's control. The tent's porosity as a structure open to different possible interpretations came to shelter all the instabilities that would haunt Percier and Fontaine's vision of an imperial architecture: the female other, exile, and the eruption of time and temporality in architecture, as it moved away from the Neoclassical conception of architecture as a language of monumentality and eternity. Thus, in order to understand fully the range of significance of Percier and Fontaine's interior decoration, as it came to be appropriated beyond the theoretical strictures of the architects, we have to trace the evolution of Malmaison, from a country retreat to a military office and finally, to a place of self-imposed exile for Josephine. It was ultimately Napoleon's ex-wife who would co-opt the martial themes that Percier and Fontaine had harnessed to the tent and transform the itinerant structure into a site of feminine dwelling and the nostalgic evocation of the past.

Directory Classes

Before Napoleon and his wife Josephine's arrival, Malmaison was a country estate that had belonged to elite members of ancien régime society. The small-scale chateau is located in

Rueil-Malmaison, today a suburb northwest of Paris. The property is located next to a large

park, Bois Préau, and the small town of Rueil. Originally a fiefdom of the Abbé of Saint-Denis,

the financier Jacques-Jean Lecoulteux du Molay and his wife purchased the property in 1771.

The couple maintained an active salon where distinguished intellectuals and nobles socialized,

among them Count Olivarez, the duc de Crillon, l'Abbe Sieyes, and Marmontel.[375] The principal

part of the building was built gradually throughout the late seventeenth century.[376] The north and

south wings looking onto the courtyard terminated by aedicules with niches and triangular

pediments with oculi were completed during the eighteenth century. [Figure 3.10] The Le

Coulteaux de Molay couple both were imprisoned during the Terror, after which their finances

were decimated. They decided to sell their property.[377]

The acquisition of Malmaison in 1799 coincided with a major turning point in

Napoleon's political fortunes. As is well known, Napoleon Bonaparte was solider from Corsica

who swiftly rose through the ranks of the Revolutionary army, attaining the rank of commander

of the Army of Italy at the age of 30. Following his successful campaign in Italy and brokering

the Treaty of Campoformio, which transformed northern Italy into the Cisalpine Republic in

1797, Napoleon had consolidated enough military strength to push for greater political power in

Paris. Ostensibly undertaken in an attempt to deal a blow to British commercial interests in the

Orient, the botched Egyptian Expedition in 1798 has also been viewed as a part of a political

strategy that would consolidate popular support behind the general.[378] As we shall see, the

Egyptian campaign exerted a strong cultural influence over Paris. Shortly after Napoleon

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[375] bourguignon, 37.

[376] Chevallier, 24-27.

[377] Bourguignon, Jean. *Malmaison, Compiègne, Fontainebleau.* Paris: Gedalge, 1946.23.

[378] Bierman, Irene A., and Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot. *Napoleon in Egypt.* 1st ed. Reading, UK: Ithaca Press :, 2003.

abandoned his troops to the British and returned to France in October of 1799, the general staged

the coup d'état on the 18th of Brumaire (November 9). The successful coup consolidated power

in the hands of three consuls, with Napoleon at the helm as first consul.

In his private affairs, the purchase of Malmaison smoothed over a particularly turbulent

period in Napoleon's marriage to Josephine.[379] Born Marie-Josèphe-Rose de Tascher de la

Pagerie in 1763 on Martinique, Josephine moved to Paris at the age of 16 to marry to Alexandre,

vicomte de Beauharnais. Her two children, Eugene and Hortense, were born from this marriage

and were later adopted by Napoleon. A politically active figure during the revolution, the

vicomte de Beauharnais was guillotined in 1794. Josephine was thrown in jail and saved only by

Robespierre's execution and the arrival of the Thermidorian reaction. As mistress of Barras, one

of the central political statesmen of the Directory government, Josephine alongside Madame

Tallien and Juliette Recamier, was one of the celebrated *Merveilleuses* of the Directoire. In

1796, with the blessings of Barras, she married Napoleon. Their relationship was plagued with

infidelities. On the brink of separation during the Egyptian campaign, their marriage was saved

only through the intervention of Josephine's children.

Despite its strong associations with Napoleon, Josephine was the one who directed the

purchase of Malmaison. At the end of 1797, the young general sought to invest his newly found

wealth in property, following the successful first Italian campaign, which grounded the

legitimacy of the French Directory government in the successes of its military expeditions

abroad. The banker Le Coutleux de Molay heard of the general's intentions and sought to sell

him the property. However, Napoleon left for Egypt before being able to make the acquisition,

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[379] On the life of Josephine, see Bernard Chevallier, *L'impératrice Joséphine* (Paris: Presses de la renaissance, 1988).

asking his brother to purchase two other properties in Ris and Ragny instead. Josephine

persisted, and entered into negotiations with Madame de Molay in the summer of 1798, setting

the offering price at 310,000 francs. Following difficult negotiations with Madame Du Molay,

Josephine successfully acquired the property on April 21, 1799, but was unable to pay off all of

the promised installments. It was only after Napoleon's return from Egypt on October 16, 1799

that the rest of the sum was paid off. In 1799, shortly after the coup of Brumaire 18, the painter

Jean-Baptiste Isabey introduced the two young architects to Josephine and Napoleon.

The constant confusion between Malmaison as a public property of the first consul or

Josephine's private property plagued Percier and Fontaine from the outset. Napoleon and

Josephine's properties were separated, meaning that Josephine was free to acquire and possess

her own property independently of the general. Before Malmaison, Napoleon had been living in

the Palais du Luxembourg and other official residences, in essence, inhabiting government

buildings without acquiring private property of his own. And although the continuous

renovations, new structures and decoration campaigns undertaken by Percier and Fontaine at

Malmaison were paid for by the Consulate government, Josephine continued to consider the

property her own personal realm.[380]

Napoleon and his wife's decision to purchase Malmaison must be seen as part of a larger

trend among Directory society of transforming the wealth acquired from military conquests

abroad into forms of private property and extravagant displays of luxury.[381] The new upper class

of the Directoire was comprised of bankers, generals and military contractors who had grown

rich from the revolutionary wars abroad. They began purchasing the private property of exiled

nobles that had been seized by the government after 1792, transformed into *biens nationaux* and

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[380] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 37-39.

[381] Martyn Lyons, *France Under the Directory* (Cambridge [Eng.] ; Cambridge University Press, 1975).

sold at auctions.[382] Inflation of the revolutionary paper currency known as the *assignat* ensured

in particular that bankers and financial speculators were able to outbid all others.[383] With their

newfound wealth, Directory society migrated from the ancien régime neighborhood of Saint-

Germain towards the right bank area centered on the Chaussée d'Antin, today located in the

ninth arrondissement in Paris. Before her marriage to the general, Josephine had been living in a

small hotel located on Rue Chantereine nearby the Chaussee d'Antin in 1795, which she

purchased from the estranged wife of the actor Talma. The street was later renamed "rue de la

Victoire" following Napoleon's successful Italian campaign. Following her marriage to

Napoleon in 1796, she traveled with him to Italy, where they became the center of Milanese

society following Napoleon's victory during the Italian campaign.[384] Josephine and others

patronized the luxury market that had all but ceased during the Terror but had reemerged during

the Directory.[385] Artisans such as the furniture firm frères Jacob and the goldsmith Martin-

Guillaume Biennais began to expand their production after the guild strictures had been

abolished during the Revolution. No longer limited to crafting single kinds of objects, such

artisans began creating expansive lines of decorative objects, from cards and fans to extravagant

tableware, objects that catered to the forms of sociability reemerging in the salons of Directoire

Paris.[386]

When Percier and Fontaine were first introduced to Napoleon and Josephine, their

interior decorations had begun to attract a steady clientele. Their publication, *Palais, maisons, et*

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[382]Lyons, 36. These properties were later sold through bidding on fixed prices called *soumissions*.

[383] Ibid.

[384]Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*, 222-34.

[385] Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel, "Les Arts Du Decor." in *Aux Armes Et Aux Arts! : Les Arts De La Révolution 1789-1799,* Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel and Philippe Bordes, eds. (Paris: A. Biro, 1988)

[386] See Anne Dion-Tenenbaum, *L'orfèvre De Napoléon : Martin-Guillaume Biennais* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003).

autres edifices (1798) had already established their reputation among artists, while their work on

the stage had introduced their decoration aesthetic to a more popular audience. The interior

decorations of the *Recueil* demontrate that Percier and Fontaine knew how to adopt the Italian

models they had seen in their youth to serve the needs of the political elite of the Directory.

Following his marriage to Josephine, Napoleon too had begun to change his image from the

coarse military man with inelegant manners and a bad pronunciation of French into a

sophisticated man of the world interested in ancient history, science and the arts.[387]

Acquiring and redecorating Malmaison could thus be seen as a strategy aimed at

domesticating Napoleon. Josephine, already well known for her refined sense of taste, had asked

the painter Jacques-Louis David to recommend an architect to undertake the refurbishment of her

newly acquired property at Malmaison. David, protector and friend of Percier, mentioned the

young architect. Fontaine recalled that Percier, never liking formal presentations in company

that he was unfamiliar with, pressed Fontaine to accompany him. However, he feared that David

would attack him on political grounds, since he had tried to emigrate to England during the

Terror. However, the painter remained silent on their past encounters.[388]

As we have seen in the formation of Percier and Fontaine's friendship, it was largely

through Percier's talents and connections that Fontaine managed to survive the Terror and

ultimately take part in a string of commissions. However, while Percier was the man of the

revolution, Fontaine came into his own through the architects' relationship with Napoleon. For

whatever reasons, the general did not take well to Percier. It was the ambitious Fontaine, yoking

the talents of Percier into a partnership, who launched the architects into the relationship that

would become the basis of their fame. Fontaine's background in the practical matters of

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[387] Jourdan, *Napoléon,* 57-84.

[388] Fontaine, "Mia Vita," 57.

contractor work on site, his taking charge of the partnership's business affairs, and his flamboyant manner all made him the man of the hour in the architects' negotiations with Napoleon. Nonetheless, it was still Percier's gifts in decoration that would salvage many of their ambitious projects for imperial residences that remained unfinished for reasons of money and time.

Fontaine's description of the first encounter between architects and general in his autobiography and journal has become well known. According to the architect, Napoleon was preoccupied by the placement of recent art looted by the French army during the second campaign in Italy. The collection of objects subsequently formed the basis for the Musée Napoléon at the Louvre.[389] Fontaine recalled his initial disappointment at seeing a man of such a small stature. "A door opened at the back of the room where we were; a man of small size, dressed simply in a redingote entered: I saw, by the rush of each person going before him, that this man was the First Consul, general Bonaparte."[390] Napoleon was in the midst of discussions with David about where to place the recent spoils from Italy, among them the Laocoon and the Venus de Medici. When David indicated cautiously that the works had been placed in the Louvre, Napoleon retorted, "Why not place all of those pretty things in the church under the magnificent dome of the Invalides?" David, unable to criticize Napoleon's suggestion, introduced the architects. Percier remained silent. The First Consul turned to Fontaine, repeating the question. Horrified at the idea of seeing great works of art strewn about in the military chapel, Fontaine writes, "I forgot completely the hero, I saw no more than the little man in the gray redingote." The architect blurted out that Napoleon's idea was completely wrong.

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[389] Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre : Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-century Paris* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[390] Ibid, 58.

"What can these masterpieces of art from Italy have in common with the army that made the conquest? What kind of effect would be achieved by placing the Apollo, the Venus and the Laocoon under the vaults and the dome of the Invalides?" For his retort, Fontaine won the commission for Malmaison. Napoleon also issued a decree for transferring the flags taken from France's enemies into the Invalides. Percier and Fontaine, along with a committee were put in charge of decorating the military church with flags, which would serve as the centerpiece for a national festival.[391] [Figure 3.11]

Fontaine's romanticized first encounter with Napoleon illustrates how the war effort had complicated the status of works of art. It must have been a jarring experience for the young architects to hear the general's suggestion that the Laocoon and other antiquities be heaped up in a pile within the military church as so many spoils. For only a few years earlier, Percier and Fontaine had seen the same masterpieces as a part of curated Italian collections housed in magnificently designed galleries. And it was in this context that Quatremère de Quincy would famously pen his *Letters to Miranda*, criticizing the French government's plundering of other countries' art collections. The display of the enemy's spoils had been a tradition since antiquity. The main difference was that when Napoleon conquered the various territories throughout Italy, he forced the vanquished to sign contracts, ceding the rights to such works of art to the French state. The aesthetic import of these *chefs d'oeuvre* was subordinated to their status as objects of legal and economic significance.[392] Architecture, as Percier and Fontaine would soon discover, was not exempt from this form of cultural conversion either.

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[391] Fontaine, "Mia Vita," 60.

[392] Patricia Mainardi,,"Assuring the Empire of the Future: The 1798 Fête De La Liberté." *Art Journal* 48, 2 (Jul.1989): 155–163.

A Country House Fit for a Consul

At Malmaison, Percier and Fontaine believed that their days as mere decorators to the wealthy were over. As Percier and Fontaine described it in the *Residences des souverains*, the commission represented the chance to construct a proper country residence for Napoleon. "General Bonaparte, having abandoned, in 1799, the Egyptian expedition in order to take over the reigns of the government of France, with the title of First Consul, one of his first thoughts was to have built, a little distance from the capital, according to his taste, and after his way of living, a country home [habitation de campagne] in which he would find at the end of each week, or as one said before, at each decade, the rest and relaxation necessary to his health."[393]

Percier and Fontaine were aware of the stakes involved in building a residence for a client known for having a short temper and being miserly. The rural villas they had studied in Italy and promoted in their 1798 publication served as a source for the initial designs they presented to the First Consul on January 6, 1800. The project was later published in their book, *Résidences des souverains* [Figure 3.12]. The architects proposed separating the functions of Malmaison into autonomous units. Napoleon, Josephine and their domestic servants would be housed in the "pavillion d'habitation." The design for the central pavilion intended for the First Consul and his wife evokes Palladio's Villa Capra, or more commonly known as the Villa Rotonda, in its centralized plan of a cross set into a square.[394] It also draws from Percier's grand prix project of 1782 for a prince's pavilion, a student project that was discussed in Chapter 1. However, in contrast to the Villa Rotonda's defining feature of a central dome at the crossing,

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[393] Percier and Fontaine, *Résidences*, 5.

[394] Interestingly, Palladio did not include this design in the section of his Four Books on country villas, because "it is so close to the city that one could say it is in the city itself." Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*, Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), Book II, 94.

Percier and Fontaine placed two grand staircases leading on the east side to Napoleon's quarters and on the west, to Josephine's apartments, each part "decorated according to their tastes."[395] The pavilion's vertical axis aligned with the principal entrance gate. To either side of their apartments, Percier and Fontaine placed highly organized gardens and fountains. Three of the principle building's entrances feature stairs and porticos, while one side is without stairs. Each wing would only contain an antechamber, bedroom, and a cabinet. The north side of the pavilion features a small dining room. The first consul's salon was located in the southern room. Two staircases lead to the upper rooms, which were reserved for Napoleon and Josephine's household.

Malmaison's pre-existing structure was to be transformed into a reception house for visiting family and friends. A parallel "corps de logis" on the west side would serve as a workspace for ministers and functionaries of the state. The three separated structures were to be joined by two colonnaded galleries.[396] The grounds of the estate would be landscaped into a highly ordered series of parterres and fountains. Axial symmetry is the key motif of Percier and Fontaine's plan. The axial division between the First Consul and Josephine's wings in the pavillion d'habitation is further pronounced through the alignment of the bureaucratic wings of the state on the same side as Napoleon, and the more private, family section on the side of Josephine. It is clear that Percier and Fontaine, following convention, sought to separate work, leisure and living quarters into separate autonomous units.

It must be remembered that although Percier and Fontaine shaped their design for a new villa at Malmaison according to the needs of Napoleon, Josephine played an equally important role in its ultimate appearance. Since negotiating the purchase of the property, Napoleon's wife

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[395] Percier and Fontaine, Résidences de souverains.

[396] Chevallier, 71.

continued to maintain an interest in Percier and Fontaine's proposals and designs. Josephine was close friends with Jean-Baptiste Isabey and other painters, and according to some scholars, had a more intimate knowledge of the arts than Napoleon.[397] Her patronage of the arts and patterns of consumption formed a direct contrast to the (at least outwardly) parsimonious habits of her Corsican husband. She was an active patron of artists such as the portraitist François Gérard, the botany painter Pierre-Joseph Redouté and the painter Pierre-Paul Prud'hon. Her love of precious jewels, fashion and tasteful decors was constantly criticized by Napoleon as being a waste of money. Before moving to Malmaison, Josephine had requested that their residence on the Rue de la Victoire in Paris be "furnished in the latest elegance," in 1797. Napoleon still recalled the exorbitant cost of the redecorating campaign during his exile at Saint-Helena nearly twenty years later, telling his biographer Emmanuel Las Casas, "Imagine my surprise, my indignation and my ill humor when I was presented with the accounts for the furnishings of the salon, which appeared to me as nothing extraordinary, and which amounted nonetheless to the enormous sum of 120 to 130,000 francs!"[398] The furnishings by the frères Jacob for the Hôtel Bonaparte were based upon Percier's designs, marking one of the first important collaborations between the architect and furniture house.

What is especially pertinent to our discussion of Malmaison is that Josephine's patronage of the arts and consumption of tasteful luxury goods, activities that she construed as integral to her identity, drew nostalgically from the past cultural practices of privileged women of the ancien régime. In the epilogue to her study of the royal dairy's place in fashioning the identity of French queens, Meredith Martin writes that Josephine had Marie-Antoinette's royal dairy at

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[397] Eleanor Delorme and Bernard Chevallier, eds. *Joséphine and the Arts of the Empire* (Los Angeles: J.P. Getty Museum, 2005).

[398] Bernard Chevallier, "L'hôtel Bonaparte," http://mairie09.paris.fr/mairie09/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?document_id=14921&portlet_id=974

Rambouillet in mind when she requested that the garden theorist and designer Jean-Marie Morel

construct a working dairy on the grounds of Malmaison. Josephine requested that the marble

plaques and medallions that had decorated the Bourbon queen's rustic structure be placed in her

new dairy at Malmaison. In other words, Josephine had no problem reviving the memory of the

Bourbon queen's forms of sociability and her active patronage of pastoral forms of architecture

at her own country residence. As Martin writes, the *laiterie* at Malmaison "expressed nostalgia

for the *ancien régime* and a desire to preserve historical memory," in ways, however, that would

be opposed by Percier and Fontaine's own visions for transforming Malmaison into a *maison de*

campagne worthy of representing the military might and political ambitions of the First

Consul.[399]

As Percier and Fontaine's attentive treatment of Malmaison suggests, the *maison de*

campagne occupied a central place in the eighteenth-century architectural imaginary. The

country house, initially discussed in the context of pastoral retreat and pleasure, was

reconfigured in polemical writings calling for utopian reform.[400] During the seventeenth century,

French humanists such as André Félibien discussed the *maison de campagne* in the context of

antiquity. Félibien wrote an commentary on the Roman writer Pliny the Younger's country

house, famously described in his epistolary writings,[401] a literary trope that Durand would

include in his own theoretical writings at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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[399] Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens : the Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine De' Medici to Marie-Antoinette* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 261.

[400] For the central role of the pastoral retreat in the context of absolutism and gender in the court, see Martin, *Dairy Queens*.

[401] Pliny, the Younger, Vincenzo Scamozzi, and J.-F. Félibien des Avaux. *Les Plans Et Les Descriptions De Deux Des Plus Belles Maisons De Campagne De Pliné Le Consul, Avec Des Remarques Sur Tous Ses Bâtimens, Et Une Dissertation Touchant L'architecture Antique & L'architecture Gothique*. Paris: F. & P. Delaulne, 1699.

The maison de campagne--a term that was interchangeable with the maison de plaisance--was firmly ensconced within the social order of the *ancien régime* and its privileging of the countryside's pleasures. This is indicated in Jacques-Francois Blondel, *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance, et de la decoration des edifices en general* (1737-8). Blondel's book represented an apogee in domestic building commissions in the early part of the eighteenth century, when the greatest innovations in architecture took place within projects for private hotels and countryside residences. Commissioned by nobles and financiers, these domestic architectural projects allowed architects to create internal distributions aimed at producing comfort, intimacy and private forms of pleasure. Scholars have even argued that these architectural forms constituted a political challenge to the aesthetic hegemony of Louis XIV and Versailles.[402] For Blondel, country houses were to be sources of pleasure. Blondel wrote that although the city offered the enjoyments of society, the countryside and the *vie champêtre* also played an important role in the necessary relaxation of people of all classes. "The great go there to get away from the important occupations that attach them to the welfare of the state; others go there to reap the fruits of their domain and sometimes the father of a family, by a spirit of economy, confines himself [to the countryside] for the rest of his days, in order to live with ease off of the different harvests that each season offers."[403]

Blondel writes that as a form of private building in a rural environment, the country residence requires a different kind of design than public or urban buildings. He writes that the architect must pay careful attention to gardens, arguing that the disposition of the garden must be

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[402] Michael Dennis, *Court & Garden : from the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986)..

[403] Jacques-François Blondel, *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance, et de la décoration des édifices en général* (Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1737.[reprint]) 7. Reflecting his own work on Diderot and D'Alembert's Encyclopédie project, Blondel has divided his "table de matieres" into an alphabetical list of reflections on various subjects relating to the materials covered in the book.

such that it only gradually reveals itself to the eye.[404] Although Blondel rejected the new trend

of picturesque gardens emerging from England, his own theory of distribution evoked a similar

sensation within the inside of the building. Blondel's book provides examples of *maisons de*

campagne of different size and rank which he had designed for different patrons. Each design is

based upon *convenance,* or the fitness of certain kinds of buildings depending on the patron's

social standing. "The spirit of convenance directs the choice of site, the justness of the

proportions, and the fitness of the arrangements...in a word, it is through convenance that a

building can attain all of its perfection and that one can find an agreeable correspondence of the

parts with the whole." Fitness required the architect's judgment, the patron's social rank and

broader social custom into one overarching term. As we have seen in the previous chapter,

judgment as a distinctive form of knowledge, or sensibility, placed the architect above the mere

builder or contractor.

Blondel's conceptions, despite their range of size and economy, rely above all on the

social rank of the patron and building accordingly. For Blondel, there is a strong correspondence

between the magnificence of orderly gardens, and the artfully arranged distribution of the interior

rooms of a chateau. The first project of the book is a design that Blondel executed for a

nobleman's country house.[Figure 3.13] It forms the most extensive project of the book. The

architect explains that his central problem was designing a rural retreat that would nonetheless

maintain the decorum necessary to the rank of the nobleman, all the while catering to his client's

desire for a comfortable residence. Blondel incorporated a *chambre de parade*, built for a "grand

Seigneur" who was visiting the country home, indicating that the rules of court etiquette applied

in the countryside as well. However, the author indicates in his text that most owners did not use

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[404] Blondel, *Maisons de plaisance*, 7.

the large, magnificent rooms during the winter because they were difficult to heat. They preferred staying in the smaller rooms on the upper floors when not entertaining. Blondel accomodated such practical concerns into his design by building smaller units accessible from the main room through a stairwell.[405]

By the mid-eighteenth century, the rose-colored pastoralism of the nobility had been turned on its head by the Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's call for societal reforms through a return to nature. According to Rousseau's pastoral philosophy, man was not inherently evil; it was society and above all the negative influence of the city that produced the vices and inequalities of mankind. The amorous protagonists living in a rustic hamlet in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) sparked a widespread *culte de sensibilité* where fans of the philosophe's novel ran to the hills in order to express their newfound emotions against a rural, picturesque backdrop. Rousseau also gave nature a constructive, pedagogical role in *Émile, or on Education* (1762), arguing that the rural countryside provided the best environment (hypothetically at least), for educating children.

Influenced by Rousseau's philosophical musings, architects envisioned the *maison de campagne* as an instrument of architectural reform. Architectural theorists increasingly drew on Rousseauist conceptions such as nature's ability to reform man as well as the economic theories of the *physiocrates*, a group of influential agrarian reformers who believed that a fertile, productive countryside, not capital, was the key to a robust French economy. [406] Even though Claude Nicolas Ledoux envisioned utopia in the shape of a city named Chaux, his urban vision

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[405] Blondel, *Maisons de plaisance*, 23.

[406] Liana Vardi, *The Physiocrats and the World of the Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For a discussion of the physiocrats' influence on Ledoux, see Anthony Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux : Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

was nonetheless projected onto a rural expanse and comprised of a series of ideal country houses built for individuals of all classes and occupations. [Figure 3.14].

An interest in private residences only reemerged during the Directory period in tandem with the growing popularity of Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations. As we have seen with Percier and Fontaine's foray into the competitions of Year II, the torrent of architectural designs commissioned by the Committee on Public Safety focused on constructing places for public assembly rather than sites of secluded privacy. Private domestic architecture, above all the country house, did not mesh easily with the public tenor of building projects initiated during the French Revolution. In *Plans, coupes, élévations des plus belles maisons et des hôtels construits à Paris et dans les environs* (1801), the architect Jean-Charles Krafft and engraver Pierre-Nicolas Ransonnette's book of residential architecture, they write that it was only after the revolution that domestic building had finally reached a point of perfection. The authors depict houses that had been built over a number of years, from the 1780s up until the Directory period, including designs by Francois-Joseph Belanger, Ledoux and other architects favored during the *ancien régime*. [Figure 3.15] Although there is no explicit mention of the political turmoil that transformed these formerly noble houses into the property of the nouveau riche, Krafft and Ransonnette mention the present owners of the buildings in their text. In the conclusion to their book, the authors write that whereas the "siècle de Louis XIV" had seen the development of grand architecture, interior distribution had been neglected. The reverse was true during the reign of his grandson Louis XV, when the search for comfort led to the building of hotels, country and pleasure houses, containing interior spatial arrangements that were so novel that they became "something of a new art form."[407] Yet this innovation in the interior became so rampant

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[407] Jean Krafft and Nicolas Ransonnette, *Plans, Coupes, Élévations Des Plus Belles Maisons Et Des Hôtels Construits à Paris Et Dans Les Environs* (Paris, Clousier1801).

in the subdivision of complex spaces that "in the end one did not hesitate to sacrifice often the outside of buildings to the conveniences of their interiors."[408] The architects write that it was only within the past 25 to 30 years that architecture has finally paired the "beautiful proportions of ancient architecture with the most agreeable distributions," characteristics that mark the advent of what they call the "new architecture."[409]

Percier and Fontaine actively participated in the attempt to bring domestic building projects within the fold of architectural discourse in their first book, *Palais, maisons et autres édifices*. Furthermore, as their Palladian design for Malmaison shows, the maison de campagne provided an entry point for architects to contemplate domestic forms that contrasted to the sacred spaces of ancient Greece championed by Le Roy. Percier and Fontaine believed that the small houses, villas and palaces that had been overlooked by the other architecture students in Rome could serve as models for the new, non-noble residences being built in Directory France[410] [Figure 3.16]. Furthermore, Fontaine described their subsequent publication, *Villas de Rome* (1809) as a book of "maisons de campagne."[411] The book on villas constituted one of Percier and Fontaine's most expensive publications to print because they hired professional engravers to copy the architects' original drawings using an etching technique that was costlier than *gravure au trait*.[412] Percier and Fontaine had begun working on the engravings as early as 1794[413] and

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[408] Krafft, Ransonnette "Conclusion," in *Plans*.

[409] Ibid.

[410] Of course, Italy as a reference for architectural design has a longer history, with a strong association with French classicism. See Jean-Philipe Garric, *Recueils d'Italie : Les Modèles Italiens Dans Les Livres D'architecture Français* (Sprimont, Belgique: Mardaga, 2004).

[411] Fontaine still sought new who suggested as a subject for the ecole d'architecture architectural competition a maison de campagne for the First Consul in April 1801, suggesting that he thought it merited a subject that would make a good intellectual exercise for students.[1] However, there were no drawings submitted for the proposed competition, which had a constantly fluctuating number and quality of entries. Pluviose An 9, AN AJ/52/95, Archives nationales de France, Paris, France.

[412] Fontaine, "Mia Vita,"52.

continued to work on the publication for the next fifteen years. This suggests that the likelihood that the architects hoped that Malmaison would serve as a demonstration of how to adapt the Italian villas included in the book, such as Pirro Ligorio's Casina Pia in the Vatican, to a new French locale [Figure 3.17].

Like Percier and Fontaine, Louis-Ambroise Dubut, a student of Ledoux, turned to the domestic architecture of Renaissance Italy in his publication, *Architecture civile* (1803) [Figure 3.18]. In his introduction, Dubut writes that the home of the city dweller "may not appear to be the most elevated form of art, but it is nonetheless one of the most useful, and it is often the most needed; yet it is also an area [of architecture] to which young architects attach the least amount of importance."[414] Turning away from Blondel and the French art of distribution, Dubut argued that the galleries and loggias that formed a mainstay of rural Italian houses were beautiful because they were useful.[415] For Durand, the *maison de campagne* connected his modern rationalist, utilitarian theory somewhat idiosyncratically to the antiquarian pursuits of humanists like Félibien. In his lectures on architecture (1802-5), Durand included the *maison de campagne* in the section on private buildings in the part of his text devoted to the description of common building types [Figure 3.19]. In contrast to the pithy descriptions of the museum, the library and the prison, Durand provides a lengthy encomium to the country house. He writes that "If happiness is anywhere to be found, it is surely in a country house, agreeably sited, far from the cares of business, the tumult of cities, and the vices of overpopulous communities. In such peaceable dwellings, the sweetest repose may be enjoyed, and the joys of study savored without distraction; there, the delights of friendship are unconstrained; the soul is exalted by the

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[413] Fontaine, Mia Vita, 53.

[414] Louis-Ambroise Dubut, *Architecture civile. Maisons de ville et de campagne de toutes formes et de tous genres, projetées pour être construites sur des terreins de différentes grandeurs* (Paris: J.M. Eberhart, an XI.[1803]).

[415] Dubut, *Architecture civile*, Introduction, n.p.

magnificent spectacle of nature."[416] For Durand, ancient precedents provided the best models for building the modern country house. Quoting from Pliny the Younger's famed letter to Apollinaris describing his villa called Laurentinum (the same ancient text used by Félibien), the *maison de campagne* instigates an antiquarian reverie in a book otherwise rooted in engineering and the rational methods of building. Certain scholars have read Durand's reference to Pliny as an anomaly in a modern theoretical system directed towards engineers, which otherwise seeks to efface architecture's basis in the classical tradition.[417] However, it is difficult not to read Durand's description as a nostalgic evocation, when juxtaposing this idyllic vision of the countryside with the reality of war. For as Percier and Fontaine would discover, their designs for Malmaison as a rural retreat sealed off from the worries of Paris could not be protected from the practical and economic demands of their patron, who subordinated everything to the costs of the battlefield.

Pyramids and Military Conquest

So far, I have tried to situate Percier and Fontaine's design for Malmaison within the Directory period's renewed interest in domestic architecture. The architects responded to Napoleon's request to refurbish the outdated estate by designing a Palladian villa, articulating their growing interest in the Renaissance as a source of inspiration for their building projects. In seeking to make a country estate that would establish the rank of their new patron, Percier and Fontaine nonetheless depended upon a system of building that drew upon the social order of the

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[416] Durand, *Précis*,174.

[417] Antoine Picon, "From 'Poetry of Art to Method': The Theory of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand," Introduction, in Durand, *Précis*, 1-68.

ancien régime. In the process of catering to the demands of Napoleon, they discovered that they could not rely on the same notions of decorum and convenance that had been pronounced again and again by Blondel as architecture's proper domain. The architectural vocabulary that Percier and Fontaine sought to implement took too much time and money. Furthermore, their patron saw no point in respecting the rules of fitness, when abandoned buildings could be repurposed easily with a quick change of decoration. Napoleon's "repurposing aesthetic" was demonstrated, for example, in his subsequent demand for Percier and Fontaine to transform Marie-Antoinette's pleasure dairy at Rambouillet into a temple dedicated to military triumph, merely by adding a bas-relief. [Figure 3.20][418] With Napoleon's constant interventions and demands for Malmaison to incorporate new spaces and functions regardless of its status as a country house, Percier and Fontaine again relied upon their experience as stage decorators in order to accommodate their client. Percier and Fontaine's work at Malmaison took on the character of a series of interventions and renovations that would nonetheless prove critical to generating an image of Napoleonic power.

In order to understand the full significance of Malmaison, it has to be read against the string of military successes that transformed the outsider Corsican general into a god of war. During the First Italian Campaign in 1796, when Bonaparte took command of the Army of Italy, the principle aim was to force Victor Amadeus III, King of Sardinia, to cede Nice and Savoy, key strategic areas for the French. The second Italian campaign against the coalition led by Austrian and Russian monarchies in 1800 ostensibly served to solidify Napoleon's position in the fraught political circumstances of Paris, following his coup on the 18th of Brumaire in 1799. It was during the second campaign that Napoleon made the bold decision to march France's

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[418] Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 225. Although as Martin points out, Rambouillet was hardly used by Marie-Antoinette and served more as a male fantasy of what an ideal woman ought to be.

reserve army, comprised of 40,000 men, through the St. Bernard Pass.[419] After Napoleon's

return to Malmaison on July 9, 1800 from winning the Battle of Marengo during the second

Italian campaign, renovations on the chateau picked up speed. The decisive victory at Marengo

on June 14, 1800, ultimately lead to the Treaty of Lunéville in 1801, signed between the

Republic of France and the Holy Roman Empire.

Napoleon's military campaigns and the Directory government's expansionist policies

transformed the visual culture of the revolution. Napoleon was at the center of a new cast of

military heroes depicted in history paintings, engravings and other forms of propaganda

commissioned by the government. In the context of the painting salons, history painters sought

out new modes of depiction in order to process the events occurring on the battlefield whose

ultimate political significance remained unclear.[420] As Susan Siegfried has argued, Napoleon

encouraged the government to support the creation and display of paintings depicting his recent

military successes at the Salon of 1801. Artists were thus asked to visualize—and idealize—the

events of the battlefield that the public in Paris could not witness themselves directly. Despite

relying on different pictorial strategies, the paintings by Antoine-Jean Gros and Louis-François

Lejeune displayed at the salon of 1801 both served to transform Napoleonic battles into historical

events significant to France's destiny [Figure 3.21].

Architecture too was affected by the military events erupting around 1800, as Percier and

Fontaine were well aware at Malmaison. Despite approving of their early plan, the highly

ordered Palladian pavilion and formal landscaped grounds proposed by Percier and Fontaine and

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[419] Marco Gioannini, "Le campagne d'Italia di Bonaparte attraverso i disegni di Bagetti : sguardo antiretorico e quotidianità strategica," in *Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti: Pittore di battaglie: Vue des campagnes des français en Italie (1796 e 1800) : i disegni delle campagne napoleoniche della GAM Torino* (Torino: Galleria civica d'arte moderna e contemporanea, 2000). 11-17.

[420] Susan Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," *The Art Bulletin* 75, 2 (June 1, 1993): 235–258.

later engraved in the *Résidences* was never realized. Each time Fontaine approached Napoleon to discuss when the larger reconstruction project would begin, the First Consul asked him to make small adjustments to the dilapidated, preexisting building.

The architects began with structural renovations. In 1800, shortly after receiving the commission, they built external buttresses along the ground floor of the building in order to fix structural weakness of the walls. Placing statues atop the piers lent the chateau a trace of the Palladian elegance that the architects originally sought to implement in their villa plan. Inside, the architects reinforced the weak vestibule area with four posts, which they covered with plaster in order to produce the effect of marble columns. In order to open up the entrance of the chateau, the architects punctured the walls on either side of the vestibule and placed moveable mirrors that could be positioned to create separate rooms or withdrawn so that visitors could have immediate access to the adjoining rooms. By the time they were asked to cease work on Malmaison in order to take on larger projects in 1802, Fontaine wrote that they had spent more money on all of the various refurbishments than it would have cost to build the new pavilions that he and Percier had originally proposed. "Everything had been restored, room by room, with an extraordinary promptitude and without ever interrupting the frequent voyages that he was accustomed to making." Fontaine described the range of renovations, structural and decorative, that the architects ultimately undertook. They rearranged the ground floor into a series of large rooms that unfurled horizontally, terminating in a library and a small gallery on each side. On the first floor, Percier and Fontaine arranged the First Consul's bedroom and seven other bedrooms. The architects also constructed new kitchens in the outer farm buildings and built a

small theater for the family's entertainment that was connected to the gallery by a covered

passage.[421] [Figure 3.22]

Speed, and the need to decorate the chateau in as swift a manner as possible, defined

Percier and Fontaine's commission. Fontaine's journal entries from the period are punctuated

with accounts of Napoleon's sudden appearance at Malmaison, and his demands for new

renovation projects to be initiated for official visits and meetings even before previous

construction work had been completed. Instead of a leisurely *maison de plaisance*, Malmaison

became the de facto site of discussions on strategic deployments, army munitions and political

affairs. As Fontaine wrote in his journal, "In principal, the first consul is only supposed to come

to Malmaison to relax and forget once a week his affairs of governing the state; but today he

receives tributes, the ministers come to give him accounts, the heads of armies pay court to him,

and everything is too small for all of these people."[422] Each time the First Consul appeared, the

function of the chateau changed.

Malmaison became increasingly becoming harnessed to Napoleon's role as the head of

state. Percier and Fontaine's swift refurbishment of the *salon de compagnie* demonstrates the

increasing pressure that Napoleon placed upon the architects' decorating campaign. The salon

was located on the northern wing of the chateau on the ground floor. On July 9, 1800, Napoleon

demanded that the architects redecorate it. Fontaine wrote that although the salon had been

outfitted with new mahogany wall paneling by the furniture maker Jacob and covered with

expensive velour drapes, the room had a "sad air." The architects asked the history painters

Anne-Louis Girodet and François Gerard, as well as the landscape painters Jean-Joseph-Xavier

Bidauld, Nicolas-Antoine Taunay, Alexandre-Hyacinthe Dunouy and Fontaine's old friend

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[421] Fontaine, *Journal* I, 52 .

[422] Fontaine,*Journal,* I, 15.

Jean-Thomas Thibault, to supply paintings to fill the space between the pilasters. At Malmaison,

we can see how the architects continued to rely upon the artistic friendships they had forged as

students in order to fulfill parts of their commissions beyond their expertise. Charles Landon, in

his arts journal wrote that Percier and Fontaine's decision was "dicté par l'amitié."[423] Fontaine

wrote that Josephine had asked that the paintings "represent the traits of the life of the

General."[424] Only two of the landscape paintings had been finished on time. Fontaine hung

them in May 1801, just before Napoleon's meeting with Louis I, King of Etruria.[425] Josephine's

request demonstrates just how pervasive the quest to incorporate martial themes in all genres of

painting had become. One of the small landscape paintings by Taunay featured the "First consul

asleep in a passage of the Alps just before the battle of Marengo." The other painting depicted

the "First consul at the summit of the Alps, revealing to his army the unfurling Lombardian

landscape." The paintings had just been hung when the First Consul entered. He demanded that

they be taken down immediately. Napoleon disliked the paintings less for their style, than for the

way in which he had been depicted.

Napoleon's visceral reaction to the small paintings shows how sensitive he was to his

image, particularly when it was to be viewed by Louis I, a member of Hapsburg royalty by birth

and a Bourbon by marriage. The two larger paintings by David's pupils Girodet and Gerard,

intended for the salon, however, were much more to the first consul's liking. Being a classically

trained painter, Girodet wanted to depict Napoleon with the traits of Hercules striking a monster

vomiting fire. However, Percier dissuaded him from the subject, telling him of the general's

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[423] Charles Landon, Landon. *Nouvelles des arts, peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1801), 19.

[424] Fontaine, journal 20 july 1800.

[425] Louis was a member of the Bourbon family and son-in-law to Charles IV, King of Spain.

dislike for allegory.[426] It is also likely that the Hercules reference would have been too evocative

of the revolutionary festivals during the Terror. Girodet and Gérard thus both painted themes

relating to Ossian, a mythic Norse poem fabricated by the Scottish poet James MacPherson as an

ancient alternative to the Homeric epic. Napoleon was an avid reader of Ossian and approved of

both paintings. Girodet's painting, displayed at the salon of 1802, was titled *Ossian Receiving*

the Ghosts of Dead French Heroes, while Gérard's depicted Ossian evoking the phantoms with

his harp on the banks of the Lora [Figure 3.23 and 3.24]. The two artists sanctified the heroes of

the French army in a new myth divorced from the revolution's classical vocabulary. Both

Gérard and Girodet's uncanny depiction of spirits called for a muted painterly touch that

softened the blow of military sacrifice and violence.[427] In a letter to Napoleon, Girodet indicates

that Percier and Fontaine felt that the painting was not a good match for the salon decor.

However, the painter received the general's approval to have it displayed in the salon.

The visual problems encountered by Percier and Fontaine at the *salon de compagnie*

demonstrate that Malmaison's interior decorations participated in Napoleon's attempts to

negotiate an image of himself in a process that Nebahat Avcioglu has termed "self-

representation," a means by which individuals with precarious political positions drew from

alternative sources of meaning—notably cultures of the Other—in order to fashion new identities

for themselves[428]. She writes that "self-representation hence develops as a force from the

periphery of power and is entangled in the psychology of the displaced and the politically

precarious. That is to say its aim is ultimately not about dismantling the hierarchical relationship

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[426] Chevallier, *Malmaison,* 85.

[427] Thomas Crow reads Girodet and Gerard's painting techniques as a direct confrontation/opposition to David's hard outlines. See Thomas Crow, Emulation.

[428] Nebahat Avcioglu,*Turquerie and the Politics of Representation, 1728-1876* (Farnham ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2011).

between center and periphery, but to empower oneself through the expression of the 'other within.'"[429] Avcioglu analyzes deposed Polish ruler Stanislas Leszczynski's usage of Ottoman architectural typologies at two estates where he lived in exile, Tschifflik (1714) in Zweibrücken, and the Kiosque and Trèfle pavilion at Lunéville (1737-8) [Figure 3.25]. As Avcioglu persuasively argues, the deposed king did not simply adopt the forms of the tent or kiosk because they were whimsical, exotic structures with no point of reference save in the imagination. After spending time in Ottoman territory during his exile, Stanislas chose to adopt the model of the tent or kiosk at Lunéville because he recognized it as a sign of Ottoman imperial power connected to the famed Topkapi Palace. Avcioglu writes that "Stanislas's use of Turkish forms...was predicated upon the urge, as a king without a kingdom, to fashion a tangible royal identity for himself, and to reinforce a precarious sense of (royal) self with a brand new visual language whose symbolic richness was paramount."[430] This fluidity of cultural signs between Europe and the Ottoman Other constituted a central part of the cosmopolitan intellectual milieu of the Enlightenment that ended toward the end of the eighteenth century, with the epistemic shift that sought to create an impenetrable barrier between European culture and an ontically different other.[431]

Even though Napoleon's Egyptian campaign has been construed as marking the end of the Enlightenment's encounters with other cultures, Avcioglu's discussion of marginal political identities such as Stanislas is nonetheless germane to our investigation of Napoleonic self-fashioning. For the first consul, like the Polish monarch, sought to activate a representational system of alterity in order to secure his political position, particularly through the Egyptian

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[429] Avcioglu, *Turquerie*, 17.

[430] Avcioglu, *Turquerie*, 83.

[431] Avcioglu, *Turquerie*, 74.

campaign. Napoleon sought to construct a new identity for himself by momentarily identifying

with a foreign culture. However, unlike Stanislas, Napoleon sought to conquer the exotic culture

through a *mission civilatrice* that would bring equality and freedom to an Egyptian society under

the control of the Mamluks, a group of warlords who had been instated by the Ottoman

Empire.[432] The Egyptian expedition began as an attempt to overthrow the Mamluks, establish a

French colony that would make up for the loss of strategic territories such as Haiti and above all,

to threaten British commercial interests in India.[433]

The alliance of culture, science and military force distinguished Napoleon's Egyptian

expedition from previous attempts to conquer Ottoman territories. Napoleon landed at Aboukir

Bay in 1799 with a team of scholars, engineers, artists and savants accompanying his army. For

Edward Said, the Egyptian campaign's combination of cultural and military forces marked a

turning point in the West's attempts to conquer and control the orient by constructing a

hegemonic system of representation.[434] For Said, the encyclopedic *Description de l'Égypte*

(1809-28), which compiled all of the images and data that had been gathered by the savants of

the expedition, demonstrated how Enlightenment thought had calculated, visualized and

categorized Egypt into a site fully accessible to Western domination. [Figure 3.27] Recent

criticism has highlighted how Said's overarching framework, separating East and West into

monolithic polarities, ended up dismantling the subtleties of geographic difference and the

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[432] Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities : Painting Empire in Post-revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

[433] Geoffrey Symcox, "The Geopolitics of the Egyptian Expedition," in *Napoleon in Egypt*, Irene Bierman, ed, *Napoleon in Egypt* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press :, 2003).

[434] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). For a different take on Orientalism that seeks to move away from Said's notion, see Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains : French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

complex cultural interactions that in fact took place at the end of the eighteenth century.[435]

Furthermore, as Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby has noted, Napoleon's expedition was ultimately a military failure, which had resulted in the loss of French troops and in the end had gained nothing, in terms of territory, for France.

However, the cultural conversion of Egypt proved much more successful in France. There was a point in his quest to conquer the territory that Napoleon toyed with adopting the image of the Muslim brother, who sought to bring freedom to the oppressed subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Upon his return to France, he brought back a Mamluk with him named Roustam, who served as his constant companion, sleeping outside of his bedroom and accompanying him in numerous paintings and visual representations. Napoleon was also depicted a number of times alongside a troupe of Mamluk soldiers, whose foreign costume created a protective sphere around the plain-clothed first consul. [Figure 3.26][436]

Before Napoleon's campaign, Egypt was already a familiar source of literary, artistic and architectural inspiration. The Comte de Caylus devoted an ample amount of space in his *Recueil d'antiquités* to the consideration of Egypt and its influence on Greek and Roman monuments, while Fischer von Erlach's prints and Piranesi's Egyptian-influenced decorations found in his *Diverse manieri d'adornare cammini* (1769) book indicate how deeply Neoclassicism's picturesque imagination was intertwined with the idea of Egypt.[437] For late-eighteenth century

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[435] Avcioglu. Introduction.

[436] For a more indepth discussion of the significance of the Mamluk in Napoleonic imagery, see Grigsby, *Extremities.*

[437] Michael Pantazzi, Christiane Ziegler, and Jean-Marcel Humbert eds., *Egyptomania : Egypt in Western Art 1730-1930 : Paris, Musée Du Louvre, 20 January-18 April 1994, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 17 June-18 September 1994, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 16 October 1994-29 January 1995* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada ;, 1994.) On the significance of the pyramid for funerary architecture, see Etlin, *The Architecture of Death.*

architects, the pyramid constituted the very language of monumentality.[438] Percier and Fontaine

had incorporated a number of Egyptian elements in their decorative programs as markers of

distinction. In one of his earliest commissions in 1791, Percier designed an Egyptian tombstone

for the banker Jean-Joseph de la Borde's garden at Méréville[439], which drew from the Egyptian

objects he had seen in collections at the Villa Borghese and the Villa Albani[440] as well as the

decorative motifs he had studied on countless sarcophagi and other funerary monuments in

Rome.[441] Their design for a "Clock in the Egyptian Style," on plate VIII of the *Recueil de*

décorations intérieures attests to the widespread fashion for Egyptian forms [Figure 3.28]. In the

explanation of the plate, they write that "The desire to have a piece of furniture that does not

resemble all others led for the request for us to design this in the Egyptian taste without seeking

to denature the form necessary to the mecanism of ordinary clocks. We were thus limited to

repaneling the faces and contours of the signs with ornaments taken from Egyptian works."[442] In

the architects' conception then, an Egyptian motif signaled a slight departure from the classical

repertoire, but one that could nonetheless be fused to Roman, Greek and Renaissance models, as

demonstrated in a watercolor and ink drawing for a console by Percier [Figure 2.15].[443] A

Nubian figure with a gilded nemes headdress wears a tightly fitted skirt with fabricated

hieroglyphs forming a vertical band in front of her torso. Her head supports the top of the

console, decorated with a frieze covered with scarabs, a sistrum, and a canopic vase placed

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[438] See Rykwert, *The First Moderns*

[439] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers*,124.

[440] See Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel, "Charles Percier et la salle égyptienne de la Villa Borghese," in Georges Brunel, ed., *Piranèse Et Les Français: Colloque Tenu à La Villa Médicis, 12-14 Mai 1976.* 2 Vols (Roma: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1978).

[441] Ottomeyer, *Das frühe Oeuvre Charles Perciers* 126.

[442] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, explanation table, plate 8.

[443] Louvre. Egyptomanie.

between two uraeus framed by wings. Here, archaeological accuracy is less important than the creation of a compositional whole fused on the page, suggested furthermore by the figure of a muse surrounded by Pompeiian grotesques set within the design for the console.[444]

Under the direction of Dominique-Vivant Denon, Napoleon's Egyptian expedition and other military events became inscribed into new narratives of French history.[445] The writer and savant had accompanied the general to Egypt in 1799 and in 1804, became the first head of the Musée Napoléon, the museum in the Louvre that was later renovated by Percier and Fontaine. Denon was not merely in charge of acquiring, arranging and cataloging the objects that entered the new museum. As mentioned earlier, Denon activated that artifacts and artworks within a political narrative that sought to construct a new history of the Napoleonic empire. Unlike antiquarians like Caylus, Denon positioned Egypt in terms of an actual territorial conquest in his book *Voyage dans la basse et haute d'Égypte suivant la campagne de Bonaparte* (1802), a widely successful account of his voyage to Egypt published just after his return to France. Denon's book provides a day-by-day, and at times hour-by-hour account of the events while being "embedded" with the French troops. He included images and descriptions of the great Egyptian monuments he had seen such as the Temple of Denderah and the Sphinx, romantically conflating his task of making rapid sketches with "making war" (going on to explain that the quality of his sketches mattered less than capturing the details of a locale)[446] [Figure 3.29]. Despite claiming to have observed the events and sites of Egypt first-hand, Denon's account actually drew from earlier published sources. Furthermore, the "documentary" images included

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[444] Projet de console à l'égyptienne. Louvre départment des arts graphiques, RF 30630. Egyptomania, 285-6.

[445] Pierre Rosenberg and Marie-Anne Dupuy, eds,,*Dominique-Vivant Denon, L'oeil De Napoléon.* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999).

[446] Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte: Pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte (* Paris: P. Didot l'aîné, 1802), 2.

in the book relied as much on artistic conventions as they did on his direct observations. For instance, the Battle of the Pyramids that Denon purportedly witnessed in person was based on the accounts of others. By that point, Denon had already returned to France.[447]

The essential point is that Denon brought Egypt into the French imagination and actively encouraged artists to incorporate Egyptian motifs into their oeuvre, particularly in the realm of the decorative arts. One object that clearly demonstrates Denon's aesthetic imperatives is the monumental medal cabinet, designed by Percier and executed by the goldsmith Martin-Guillaume Biennais[448] [Figure 3.30]. The goldsmith's construction of a set of portable furniture for Napoleon will be discussed later. Dated to about 1814, the mahogany cabinet was based upon Denon's own drawings of the pylon at Ghoos in *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Égypte.* [Figure 3.31] Although it was probably originally intended for Napoleon, the cabinet ended up in Denon's personal collection, alongside other Egyptian furnishings by Georges Jacob-Desmalter.[449] It is possible that the Egyptian decor found in an album attributed to Percier and Fontaine's workshop was linked to the Egyptian decor at Denon's home. [Figure 3.32].[450] The section shows three double doors, with a repeating motif of paired figures and griffons decorating the walls. In an innovative twist, the doors have been painted as double obelisks with hastily sketched hieroglyphs on them, and a winged sun disk in the over door sections.

For architectural theorists, the incorporation of Egyptian hieroglyphs visualized architecture's links to an ideal, symbolic language. In a period when philosophers believed that

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[447] Daniela Gallo ed., *Les Vies De Dominique-Vivant Denon : Actes Du Colloque Organisé Au Musée Du Louvre Par Le Service Culturel Du 8 Au 11 Décembre 1999* (Paris: Documentation française, 2001).577-8.

[448] The drawing is located at the Musée des arts décoratifs in the Album Biennais. CD 3240 [GF 9].

[449] Griffiths, Antony. "The End of Napoleon's Histoire Metallique." *The Medal* 18 (1991): 49.

[450] Gérard Auguier, Guy Portier, Alain Leroy, and Binoche et Godeau, *Dessins et tableaux anciens, ensemble de dessins et aquarelles de Fontaine, tableaux modernes, Extrême-Orient... : vente, vendredi 22 mars 1991 à 14h, Drouot-Richelieu, Paris* (Paris: Binoche et Godeau, 1991).

society's problems could be resolved through pure communication (a view explored by Rousseau in his writings on music and language), the hieroglyph offered the promise of a perfect language that would allow people to speak directly without mediation. This sensationalist notion contemplated by Rousseau would have deep-seated political consequences.[451] For Viel de Saint Maux, writing in his *Lettres sur l'architecture* (1779-84), the hieroglyphs found on Egyptian monuments attested to the symbolic origins of architecture. For Saint-Maux, Egyptian architecture proved that the ultimate meaning of building did not spring from base utility or necessity, but from a potent language that constituted the origins of all religious and social life.[452] For Quatremère de Quincy, the Egyptian hieroglyph constituted the most perfect form of architectural decoration. In his 1785 essay on Egyptian architecture, Quatremère wrote that the hieroglyph was "a sacred writing that covered literally every surface of Egyptian buildings," and constituted the source of both painting and sculpture, because hieroglyphs were both figurative and carved into the structure of Egyptian temples.[453]

Within the sociability of Napoleonic France, the display of Egyptian ornaments furthermore became a marker of military distinction. This is demonstrated at the Hôtel Beauharnais in Paris, which was renovated for Josephine's son and Napoleon's stepson, Eugène de Beauharnais from 1803-1810 [Figure 3.33]. Since Eugène was often away from Paris, scholars believe that Josephine oversaw much of the hotel's decoration.[454] The hotel was built in

[451] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). See also Sophia Rosenfeld, *A Revolution in Language : the Problem of Signs in Late Eighteenth-century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001). I thank Richard Taws for this reference.

[452] Anthony Vidler "Symbolic Architecture: Viel de Saint-Maux and the Decipherment of Antiquity," in *The Writing of the Walls : Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987) 142.

[453] Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère De Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992). 27.

[454] Thomas W. Gaehtgens, Ulrich Leben and Jörg Ebeling. "Eugène de Beauharnais: 'Honneur et fidélité' à l'Hôtel Beauharnais," in *Symboles des pouvoirs sous Napoléon*, 78-87.

1725 by Germain Boffrand and later purchased by Eugène after having served as a lieutenant in

the Egyptian campaign. Two major phases of reconstruction work took place, during 1803-6 and

from 1809-10. Percier and Fontaine designed much of the expensive furnishings and decor

during the first phase, while the architect Laurent-Edme Bataille designed the portico, created

after the temple of Denderah that was depicted in Denon's book. The Egyptian portico lends the

courtyard entrance a sense of monumentality. Inside, the Egyptian chimneypiece located in the

painting gallery on the ground floor echoes the outer portico with its temple-like form. The

chimneypiece is decorated with a winged solar disk, a band of hieroglyphs and standing Pharonic

figures. Executed by Lucien-François Feuchère, it had bronze appliqués and included matching

firedogs and girandoles. Even the luxurious fabrics used in the draperies and wall-hangings were

dyed in *terre d'Egypte*, a rich, cinnamon color popularized by the recent campaign. Far from

indicating Eugène's interest in exoticism, scholars have argued that the coordinated Egyptian

elements found at his Parisian residence were intended to emphasize his prominent position in

the Napoleonic hierarchy. For before Napoleon's remarriage to Marie-Louise and the birth of

his son, Eugène was being actively groomed as a successor.[455]

If Egypt was being repositioned as a fertile source of artistic inspiration and political

distinction, why did it remain a marginal element of Percier and Fontaine's decor at Malmaison?

Egyptian elements do in fact appear at Malmaison.[456] Christine Lancestremère has noted that the

Egyptian references around 1799 accrued around the decorative objects commissioned for

Malmaison, notably the armchairs [fauteuils] designed for the *salon de compagnie* in 1800,

which feature sphinx heads wearing the pharoanic nemes headdress and using wings as armrests.

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[455] Gaehtgens, Leben and Ebeling, "Eugène."
[456] Musée national des châteaux de Malmaison et de Bois Préau. *Malmaison et l'Egypte : Musée National Es Châteaux De Malmaison Et Bois-Préau, 15 Avril-31 Juillet 1998* (Rueil-Malmaison, France: Musée national des châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau, 1998).

The most visible manifestation of the Egyptian campaign at Malmaison was a series of portraits by Michel Rigo of members of the tribal council known as the "Diwan" [Figure 3.34]. Despite being heavily stylized, the portraits can nonetheless be identified with members of the tribal council that Napoleon had established in Egypt in the attempt to create a local administration loyal to the French, which would replace the Ottoman power structures then in place.[457] The portraits served as markers of loyalty and shared experience. Napoleon's generals, including Berthier, Bessières and Duroc, owned copies of the portraits, in addition to Napoleon's stepson, Eugène. As Melanie Ulz has noted, the portraits are not particularly well painted, and follow the anthropological model of the Oriental-type, which was more focused on depicting certain characteristic traits of the Oriental other, rather than the individualized features of the actual sitters.[458] It is likely that anything more than this representation of one of the only power bases that Napoleon managed to briefly secure in Egypt would have evoked unpleasant memories of the campaign.

Considering Percier and Fontaine's sensitivity to their client, they probably recognized that unlike Eugène, Napoleon did not want to have to walk through an enormous Egyptian temple front in order to reach the comforts of home. The subordination and diminution of what was considered a monumental culture in the decorative forms produced around 1800 at Malmaison fits in neatly with Napoleon's myopic belief that he could conquer Ottoman Egypt and convert the population to the secular, egalitarian ideals of the Republic in a matter of months. The distracted visual manifestation of the Egyptian campaign on these marginalia has to be read alongside Grigsby's claim that the colonial imagination of the empire rested as much on

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[457] Melanie Ulz. *Auf dem Schlachtfeld des Empire : Männlichkeitskonzepte in der Bildproduktion zu Napoleons Ägyptenfeldzug* (Marburg: Jonas, 2008).

[458] Ulz, *Schlachtfeld des Empire*, 68.

failures and absences as the totalizing hegemonic power of the West constructed by Said. For

Egypt was, despite its cultural celebration in Paris, a disastrous military failure. And ultimately,

it was not Egypt, but a vague reference to Napoleon's military feats that Pecier and Fontaine

chose to put into operation at Malmaison.

Under the Big Top

In the midst of the hasty renovation projects at Malmaison, Percier and Fontaine decided

upon the tent as a convenient way of addressing the impatient demands of the First Consul and to

announce the new functions of the country house. They adopted the tent in order to create a

portico at the entrance to the chateau [Figure 3.35]. A box-like structure built of glass, the tent

lends the illusion of being supported by two end columns of bundled pikes. A shield featuring a

thunderbolt is located at the center of the pediment, created from two crossed spears, and

decorated with the striped canvas cloth used for military tents. As Bernard Chevallier has noted,

the entry pavilion depicted in an engraving from 1808 by Constant Bourgeois shows that the

central window of the second floor (premier étage) was blocked, suggesting that the original

pavilion built by Percier and Fontaine would have been taller.[459] A drawing by Percier and

Fontaine [Figure 3.36] shows an alternative design for the pavilion, comprised of three openings

instead of a single entry.[460] This design suggests that the architects had considered transforming

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[459] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 81.

[460] Percier and Fontaine, "Projet pour l'entrée du château de Malmaison," Lot 262, Collection Fabius Frères, Paris 26 October 2011, Sotheby's. Included in the sale were three other engravings of interiors attributed to Percier and Fontaine but upon closer inspection, were signed "Godde" and appear to have been by a later architect. I thank David Pullins for drawing my attention to the images and Jean-Philippe Garric for allowing me to look at the drawings purchased by INHA.

the ground floor windows into full doors.[461] Lacking the pediment formed of spears, the project

instead features a larger canopy of striped cloth. The distinctive ochre-hued cloth is evocative of

terre d'Egypte color that gained popularity for its evocation of the Egyptian campaign and

deployed at the Hôtel Beauharnais.

One only needs to contrast the effect of Malmaison's portico with the monumental

entrance built for Eugène's Parisian hotel in order to understand the vastly different effect

created by the tent. In order to accommodate Napoleon and Josephine's household servants, the

architects built a small porter's lodge to one side of the courtyard and a *corps de garde* at the

other side in the form of tents. Napoleon was furious when he saw the temporary structures

standing at the entrance to the chateau and asked Fontaine who had given the orders to build

such badly done buildings. Fontaine replied that "having been called upon to work for the man

to whom France had confided its destiny, I had thought that the first of my tasks, before pleasing

him, was to take the initiative and to make the little arrangements necessary for his safety and the

convenience of his rank."[462] According to the architect, Napoleon gave the retort that the tent

form resembled an animal's lodgings at a fair. The tent was clearly not identified, at least in the

mind of Napoleon, with military glory.

As Bernard Chevalier notes, the hastily constructed tent at the entrance to Malmaison was

more readily connected to the "provisory architecture and fabriques" found within the elaborate

gardens of the eighteenth century. These evoked notions of the foreign, exotic, or primitive not

generally attached to the more typical formal architectural vocabulary of the *maison de*

campagne. A possible source for many of Percier and Fontaine's quick projects was a source of

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[461] It is also possible that the drawing is not for the principal entrance as indicated in the auction catalog, but actually for the greenhouse.

[462] Fontaine, *Mia Vita,* 61.

ancien régime pleasure: the Menus-Plaisirs, a section of the king's household that was in charge

of all spectacles, festivals and celebrations. It was through temporary festival architecture that

new ideas could be processed and visualized in novel form. Pierre-Adrien Pâris, Percier's

mentor and teacher, was the *dessinateur du Roi*, meaning that he was the architect in charge of

supplying all of the designs for the festivals organized by the Menus-Plaisirs. He had often

included tent-like canopies in his designs for festivals for the royal family. One particularly

novel design was Paris's arrangement for an elaborate ceremony to mark Marie-Antoinette's

pregnancy at the Château de Marly.[463] Erected between the waterworks at Marly, the "salle de

verdure" was comprised of a large hall terminated by two semi-circular apses. The temporary

structure was decorated with foliage on the outside, lending it an air of fantasy, and featured tent-

like canopied walkways hung with chandeliers. Paris orchestrated the change of scenery that

took place in the hall. During the day, the interior was covered in foliage, as suggested by its

name. By night, drapery, garlands and chandeliers transformed the multipurpose *fabrique* into a

ballroom. It is likely that Percier learned how to create the designs for stage sets, decorative

objects and decors under the tutelage of Paris. Percier even promised to send his mentor a copy

of the *Recueil* as a gift.[464]

Although it was not a central building type treated in architectural theory, the tent

nonetheless figured as a foil to Quatremère de Quincy's *beau idéal* and the architecture of

ancient Greece. In 1785, Quatremère de Quincy wrote an essay for a competition posed by the

Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, which asked "What was the state of Egyptian

architecture and what do the Greeks seem to have borrowed from it?" Like other architectural

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[463] Alain Charles Gruber, Les grandes fêtes et leurs décors à l'époque de Louis XVI (Geneva, Paris: Droz, 1972), 128-131. Gruber indicates that the ceremony likely took place sometime during the spring or summer of 1781.

[464] Charles Percier to Pierre-Adrien Pâris, 3 March 1804, published in Paul Marmottan, "Percier à son collègue Pâris,"*Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire et de l'art français* (1922): 327-8.

writers for whom origins theory constituted an important motif, Quatremère began his essay with a consideration of the place of Egyptian and Greek society in relation to the origins of architecture. In his essay, Quatremère included the tent as one of the three ideal types from which all architecture originated. According to Quatremère's genealogy of architecture, the cave, the tent and the hut gave birth to Egyptian, Chinese and Greek architecture respectively. For the author, the fundamental flaw of Chinese architecture rested precisely with its prototype: the tent was too unstable to serve as the ideal model of architecture's structural essence.[465]

Quatremère's triadic origins theory not only stemmed from the aesthetic theories propounded by Julien David Le Roy and Johann Joachim Winckelmann, but from the proto-anthropological writings of Cornelius de Pauw, a Dutch philosopher at the court of Friedrich the Great.[466] First published in 1773 in Berlin, de Pauw's book *Recherches philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois*, sought to refute the view, asserted by the Joseph de Guignes, that China had been a colony of Egypt.[467] In his book, de Pauw argued that it was impossible that the monuments of Egypt and China could share a common origin or model. De Pauw writes that "The character of Chinese architecture is diametrically opposed to the genius of Egyptian architecture, which tends to render indestructible, in other words immortal, all that the Chinese render extremely fragile, and still more extremely flammable, due to the varnish which covers all of their columns and the plaster, filaments, and paper mache which they fill the cavities of the wood when they are located on the base of shafts or on the visible parts of the entablature."[468] Speculating on the origins of Egyptian architecture, de Pauw insisted that while it may be

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[465] Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy*,109.

[466] Lavin *Quatremère de Quincy*, 73.

[467] Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy*, 64.

[468] Cornelius de Pauw, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Égyptiens et les Chinois. Pour servir de suite aux recherches philosophiques sur les Américains. Nouvelle édition exactment corrigée.* (Londres [i.e. Lausanne?], 1774),Vol 2, 3.

impossible to seize upon the precise originary model of Egypt's monuments, it was clear that

Chinese architecture could only have stemmed from the tent, which proved the much more

primitive character of Chinese architecture, still rooted in the itinerant, nomadic lifestyles shared

by the Tartars.[469]

The philosophical conjectures of de Pauw and others on the exotic origins of architecture

often had a way of materializing in the eighteenth-century garden, where the French love of

symmetry was being supplanted by the English picturesque garden.[470] As previously mentioned,

the deposed Polish king Stanislas had the architect Emmanuel Heré build the kiosque and the

Tréfle pavilion at Lunéville, structures which Avcioglu argues drew directly from the tent as an

Ottoman architectural typology signifying royal magnificence.[471] Although English architect

William Chambers had initiated the frenzy for Chinese pagodas and temples as *fabriques*

incorporated into the garden, it was Louis-Jean Desprez, a French architect who incorporated the

tent in a new way.[472] In 1784, the Swedish king Gustav III invited Desprez to become the

decorator for the royal Swedish opera in Stockholm and later, as his personal architect.[473]

Among other projects the architect created during his prolonged stay in Sweden, were the

pavilions and chateau commissioned for Haga. Initially beginning as a small estate purchased by

the king in 1771, Haga gradually came to encompass a vast park by the time Desprez was

commissioned to begin building projects there.[474] Gustav commissioned his gardener Fredrik

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[469] de Pauw, *Recherches*, 5.

[470] Dora Wiebenson, *The Picturesque Garden in France* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[471] Avcioglu, *Turquerie* 76. As she notes, there was a conflation among the models known as the tent, kiosk and pavilion.

[472] In some ways, Desprez' relationship with Gustav parallels that of Percier and Fontaine with Napoleon, in the micromanaging and constant changes.

[473] Nils G Wollin, *Desprez En Suéde; Sa vie et ses travaux en Suéde, en Angleterre, en Russie, etc., 1784-1804* (Stockholm: Bokförlags- a.-b. Thule, 1939).

[474] Wolin, *Desprez en Suède*, 59.

Magnus Piper to create an English garden. Reflecting the changing tastes of the temperamental

monarch, Haga began as a rustic Rousseauian retreat and gradually became the site of

monumental projects.

While Desprez was working out the design of the principal chateau, he also created the

corps de garde to house the king's guards and chose the motif of the tent [Figure 3.37]. Desprez

drew from his vast repertoire of theater decors, with a notable connection to his work on the

Swedish nationalist drama *Gustav Vasa*, written in part by King Gustav III himself. A sketch of

the sentry pavilion [Figure 3.38] shows blue and white stripes covering the walls, and a shield

and Swedish flag flying above the central opening. Yet the illusion dissolves once one enters the

tent, finding nothing more than a rectangular courtyard with wooden horse stables. The

following year in 1788, Desprez added two new pavilions in the form of tents [Figure 3.39] in

order to make up for the lack of space in the original tent.[475] As Wolin notes, the tent design for

guard pavilions was not new, and the king's previous architect Adelcrantz had already created

one at the king's residence at Drottningholm. However, the French architect's sense of

theatricality was markedly different.

The effect created by the presence of multiple tents in some measure fulfilled the

Swedish king's wish to replicate the Tartar encampment that he had seen in France at the duke of

Chartres' gardens. Gustav's copper tents vividly illustrate the frisson created by imaginary

"barbarians" camped at the edges of the park, marking the terminus between the manicured

lawns and the untamed forest. Furthermore, this imaginative copper cladding not only pushed

the boundaries of reality and fantasy, but also upended the typical conventions of the

correspondence between the exterior and interior of the building, since the inside housed nothing

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[475] Wolin, *Desprez en Suède*, 72.

more than stables and humble living quarters. The sensuous catenary curves of the pseudo-tent belied the rustic geometry of the stables, the soft drape of textile replaced with the tinny rigidity of copper.

It was François-Joseph Bélanger who brought together the theatrical and ephemeral aspects of the tent in the interior. In 1777, the Comte d'Artois commissioned Bélanger to design Bagatelle or "little nothing," on the grounds of the Bois de Boulogne [Figure 3.40]. The pavilion was built after the Comte d'Artois's sister-in-law, Marie Antoinette, wagered that he could not build a *folie* on his property in time to entertain the court in two months. Bélanger succeeded in constructing and finishing the decoration of the pavilion in a record 64 days. The principal house was small and informal, with a circular salon and central stairwell at the entry level, and a series of discreet corridors for servants. The most distinctive feature of the pavilion was the bedroom for the prince, which the architect had designed in the form of a military tent [Figure 3.41]. One visitor described it as "truly remarkable: it is in the form of a tent and everything designates it as a military apartment. The pilasters are made into bundles of arms, surmounted by a helmet; the jambs of the chimneypiece are two canons on their bolts, the firedogs shaped as canonballs, bombs and grenades."[476]

Bagatelle was intended to suit the whimsical and frivolous entertainments of the ancien régime on the eve of the Revolution. For although, as the previous visitor's description makes clear, Bélanger's design referenced the Comte d'Artois' military rank, the bedroom was situated within a larger temporary structure built for court pleasures and entertainment rather than the official representation of the prince's royal status. The military tent room acknowledged only the count's nominal rank as a "noble of the sword" and not his actual military experience, since

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[476] Quoted in Rachel Alison Perry. *Francois-Joseph Belanger, Architect (1744-1818): "Amant Passioné de son art"* (PhD. Diss, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1998), 446.

he had hardly served in any battles. As Taha Al Douri has argued, Bagatelle's quick disrepair became the very symbol of the French royalty's moral corruption.[477] Instantiating the monarchy's wasteful spending on the ephemeral constitution of pleasure, it perhaps ultimately proved Quatremère's theory correct that the tent could not possibly stand as a source for good architecture.

What sort of aesthetic gulf separates the ancien régime projects of Desprez, who had to satisfy the whims of the enlightened despot King Gustav III, and Bélanger, architect to the future Charles X from Percier and Fontaine's project at Malmaison? For one, the pleasure factor was missing from Percier and Fontaine's incorporation of the tent at Malmaison. While all three architects relied on theatrical effects in order to achieve the production of new spaces, Percier and Fontaine's usage of the tent sought to construct an architecture based in Napoleon's actual war experience. I would argue further that the architects drew in particular on their experiences at the Paris opera, designing the sets for plays that set the radical political tenor of the Terror in revolutionary France. As we saw in the previous chapter, Percier and Fontaine's theater designs were celebrated for their archaeological accuracy and believability—that one could truly feel immersed within the camp of Tarquinius Superbus and capture the raw emotions of dethroning the last king of Rome.

What stood as the theatrical backdrop to the role-playing and royal pleasures at Bagatelle became a symbol of Napoleon's military ambitions at Malmaison. Nowhere was this more evident than in the *salle de conseil*, designed by Percier and Fontaine to replace a bedroom occupied by Napoleon on the entrance floor [Figure 3.42]. Like Bélanger's bagatelle, the council room had to be built in a short period of time, specifically in 10 days. And like the

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[477] Taha Al-Douri, "The Constitution of Pleasure: François-Joseph Belanger and the Château de Bagatelle," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 48 (October 1, 2005): 155–162.

Comte d'Artois' pavilion, it was not part of the traditional repertory of rooms found in more formal residences. The council room at Malmaison replaced in some measure the ceremonial bedchamber that would have constituted the most important room of any noble hotel.

It is clear that Percier and Fontaine sought to harness the tent backdrop to this new military reality. For one visitor, the tent was a clear indicator of the general's heroism. In 1810 when the Polish countess Potocka visited Malmaison, she shuddered with delight at being in such close proximity to the place where the French emperor had once slept. Describing "a spacious tent taking the place of curtains, held up by trophies of arms," she wrote in her journal, that "These are not vain military emblems, nor rich ornaments; it's a sort of speaking chronicle which recounts the great deeds of the soldier as well as the glory of the warrior for whom it forms the spoils. All that speaks to the imagination involuntarily imposes respect and reverence."[478] For the Polish countess, the trophies of arms and tent bed constituted talismans of Napoleon's campaigns, bringing distant imperial conquests into the space of the bedroom.

Percier and Fontaine later included their design for the council room in the *Recueil de décorations intérieures* [Figure 3.43]. The image included in the book shows striped cloth lining the walls and draped around the decorative panel inserts. A low fence featuring lion's heads encloses the central discussion table. The painters Thian, Moench and Girodet painted the eight trompe-l'oeil panels of helmets, arms and trophies of the ancient tribes of the Gauls, Dacians, Persians, Etruscans and Carthaginians as well as Romans and Greeks. Four panels are located on the side of the library, the other four next to the dining room. Here, the weapons set the tone for the serious discussions that were to take place in the council room, providing Napoleon with a visual genealogy of heroes who had made history through the grand tradition of war. In the

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[478] Anna Potocka, *Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka (1794-1820)* (Paris :Librairie Plon, 1897), 258.

explanatory text accompanying the image, the architects indicate that because "we did not want to interrupt the frequent voyages that [Napoleon] was accustomed to making, it seemed appropriate to adopt the form of a tent supported by pikes, fasces and ensigns, between which are suspended groups of weapons that recall those of the most celebrated warrior peoples around the world."[479]

Reconstructed by the empress Eugenie, Napoleon III's wife in 1867 for a proposed museum of the First empire, the council room that exists today [Figure 3.42] conjures the uncanny effect of placing a collapsible structure within a solid building.[480] Despite being on axis with the enfilade or cutting across the first floor of the building, the parting fabric walls create a disjunction between the council room and adjoining dining room and library. It gives the simultaneous effect of enclosure and exposed vulnerability at the same time. Rather than attempting to create a retreat away from the warfront, Percier and Fontaine use the decor to bring the battlefield to the interior.

The tent also suggests that the greatest innovations that Napoleon made as a patron were not within the static site of the chateau or *maison de plaisance*, but on campaign. Although in the early years of the revolutionary wars, Napoleon and his officers took up residence in conquered palaces and prefectures, beginning around 1806, Napoleon began commissioning elaborate encampments from French luxury manufacturers. After he became emperor, Napoleon began traveling with two types of tent: the light service and the imperial encampment. Both forms of shelter included tents constructed of unlined striped cotton drill, with a canopy and light furniture, such as a table and two chairs. Everything in the light service was constructed to be

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[479] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil,* plate 55.

[480] For a recent consideration of Empress Eugénie's patronage of the arts, see Alison McQueen, *Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011).

light and efficient so that pack mules could carry them. A series of cases were constructed in order to contain all of the objects, allowing for optimal portability.[481] While Percier and Fontaine's *salle de conseil* incorporated the recognizable stripes of Napoleon's military encampment, they did not go so far as to utilize the canvas cloth known as *coutil de Bruxelles* that the firm Jean Claude Poussin and Jean Louis Lejeune utilized for the emperor.[482] A drawing by the military engineer and topographer Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti, depicting French army at the passage of Niemen on June 23, 1812 shows that Napoleon was not the only one to adopt this material for his quarters [Figure 3.44].

One of the most innovative accessories to the campaign was the *nécessaire*. Essentially a case or box of some sort, often covered in leather, the *nécessaire* is a type of voyage furniture that appeared in the eighteenth century. Initially containing mainly items used for dining or drinking tea, hot chocolate or coffee, nécessaire, during the later part of the eighteenth century, were modified to satisfy the distinct personal needs of its owner. [483] Larger, more elaborate cases could include plates, cups and cutlery, as well as toiletries. The innovation of the goldsmith Guillaume Biennais, was to create ingenious compartments for Napoleon to satisfy all of his needs on the campaign [Figure 3.45]. Biennais, who often collaborated with Charles Percier on commissions for the emperor, became famed for his exquisite *nécessaires* for the imperial household. Biennais, little known before the revolution, capitalized on the abolishing of the guilds during the revolution to combine his small business in making playing cards and fans into the more lucrative profession of goldsmith and furniture maker, attested by the

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[481] Ronald Pawly, Napoleon en campagne ex cat, 29.

[482] Napoleon en campagne. Mobilier national GMT 2462.

[483] Henry Havard, Havard, Henry. *Dictionnaire De L'ameublement Et De La Décoration Depuis Le XIIIe Siècle Jusqu'à Nos Jours*. Nouv. éd. entièrement refondue et considérablement augm. Paris: Quantin, Librairies-imprimeries réunies, 19. Vol 2, 1075-1081.

transformation of his professional cards.[484] [Figure 3.46] Napoleon catapulted Biennais to fame, having his entire Imperial household and his family commission luxury objects from the jack-of-all-trades. In one elegant *nécessaire* of mahogany, gilded silver, ivory and steel created for Napoleon (who ordered many), Biennais included an entire tea service set for two people, a mirror, toothbrush, scissors, various crystal containers for Napoleon's toilet, as well as a portable writing desk in a lateral drawer, and leather folders located in a hidden compartment behind a wooden panel.[485]

Napoleon's imperial encampment echoed the magnificent displays of itinerant power that had served as the basis of Ottoman architecture, emblemized above all in Topkapi Palace [Figure 3.47]. As Gülru Necipoğlu has argued, the Ottoman empire's adoption of the tent as an imperial architectural type drew upon an older nomadic tradition based in Turco-Mongol culture, seen for example in the Timurid Dynasty.[486] The tent allowed for the creation of Timur or Tamerlane's extensive empire during the Timurid Dynasty in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century. The *ordu*, or imperial encampment, was a highly ordered mobile city that traveled with the ruler wherever he went, whether in the open countryside or an urban setting. Elaborately decorated tents were formed to create a complex network of corridors, arcades and pavilions within an enclosure. The advantages of having a "mobile seat of government" for the ruler of a vast territory were clear.[487]

In Napoleon's imperial encampment, a parallel universe of architectural distribution was created by fabric partitions, canopies and mobile furniture. As Baron Fain, Napoleon's secretary

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[484] Dion-Tenenbaum, *L'orfèvre De Napoléon.*

[485] Dion tenenbaum, *L'orfèvre De Napoléon,* item 7.

[486] Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power : the Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991).

[487] Bernard O'Kane, "From Tents to Pavilions: Royal Mobility and Persian Palace Design," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (January 1, 1993): 249–268.

described it, the imperial encampment had a particular layout that would be pitched by the footmen of the household. According to Fain, Napoleon's tent was partitioned into two rooms, connected by two pieces of canvas. The first "room" housed Napoleon's study, which contained a writing table and armchair for Napoleon, and folding tables and chairs for his aides-de-camp and secretary. The second room comprised the bedroom, and included an iron camp bed draped with green silk curtains. Fain writes that the entire tent was comprised of two layers of cloth, "an outer layer which was stretched between the pegs, and a second layer beneath this forming an inner compartment. The space between the two layers became a corridor and a store where the manservant and Mameluke [Roustan or Ali] would stand, and where the portmanteaux, beds and covers for the tent equipment would be stored during the day. At night, when the Emperor had gone to bed, two cushions were set down in the first room, and this was what the aide-de-camp and the secretary called their bed."[488]

The creation of a corridor of space from a pocket of fabric is not the only aspect of the encampment evocative of the emerging interest in privacy found in the distribution designs of the eighteenth-century home. The luxury furniture maker Jacob Desmalter provided the poles for the tents, as well as the traveling furniture that was to be included inside. The outer fabric of the tents made by the manufacturers Poussin & Lejeune was comprised of a blue and white Brussels cotton drill, the same type of fabric used in the temporary tents of the Menus-Plaisirs. The interiors of the drawing room tent were lined in a more sumptuous Toile de Jouy of paisley floral motifs such as the tent preserved at the Mobilier national [Figure 3.48]. This double layer perhaps created a protective visual barrier between the carnage taking place on the battlefield and the sacrosanct enclosure reserved for the world of politesse.

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[488] Quoted in *Napoléon en campagne*, (Paris: Centre des monuments nationaux, 2005), 32.

Malmaison was not the last place where Percier and Fontaine utilized the tent for official

purposes. It became a visible part of the vocabulary of the new French empire. They

incorporated the tent into their designs for the coronation ceremony at Notre Dame [Figure 3.49]

and the distribution of the eagles at the École militaire [Figure 3.50]. In lieu of the striped cloth,

more sumptuous fabrics were adopted for the ceremonies that would mint Napoleon as official

emperor of the French. The architects featured their designs for the decoration of the military

school facade in their book on the coronation ceremony. The design made a significant

impression on Friedrich Schinkel, a young German architect who happened to witness the

festivities in Paris on his return to Prussia from Rome. [Figure 3.51] It is not difficult to draw a

connection between the imperial architectural projects designed by Fontaine, which grew ever

grander even as Napoleon's power became overstretched, and the German architects' designs for

a principality whose national identity had been profoundly shaped by the Napoleonic wars. Like

Percier and Fontaine before him, Schinkel too sought to bring his theatrical vision into the spaces

of an urbanizing Prussian state. In a direct connection to Malmaison, he adopted the blue and

white stripes of the military tent at Schloss Charlottenhof (1826-9) [Figure 3.52], a sort of

maison de campagne built at the edges of Sanssouci for the Prussian prince and later king

Friedrich Wilhelm, the very same person who had visited Fontaine in the eager hopes of catching

a glimpse of the plans for the Palais du roi de Rome.

For Napoleon, the tent thus not only answered the need for an expedient form of

spectacle architecture that could be built virtually overnight. It was a porous, undertheorized and

perhaps just un-architectural enough to be able to absorb the political symbology of the new

emperor. In essence nothing more than cloth and sticks, the tent could also be thought of as the

itinerant counter-image to the eternal pyramid, visualized in the pages of the *Description*

d'Egypte [Figure 3.53]. Percier and Fontaine incorporated the look of actual military tents used by Napoleon on the battlefield, thus bringing a sense of contemporaneity to their otherwise classically inspired decorative program. However, in doing so, they evoked the tent's sense of temporality and instability, and the sense that it lay at the frontiers of a fragile civilization capable of returning to its barbarous, itinerant roots.

The Empire of Nostalgia

In Percier and Fontaine's hands, the tent had been harnessed to the increasingly militaristic culture that came to define the Napoleonic empire. No longer linked to the cultural curiosity for other cultures or ancien regime pleasures, the tent signified Napoleon's masculine identity as military leader worthy of being remembered in history. However, this is only half of the story. For in the final episode of the Empire, Malmaison's ultimate signification does not come from its articulation of a new type of Napoleonic architecture. Abandoned early on by Napoleon in his quest to consolidate imperial power, Malmaison fell into the hands of Josephine, ultimately becoming her property in 1809 after her divorce from Napoleon. Thus, Percier and Fontaine's early project for Napoleon that showed the promise of greatness ended up, by way of Josephine, preserving the early traces of what might have been if Napoleon had never been crowned emperor and had instead maintained a kind of bourgeois private existence.

Percier and Fontaine's tenure at Malmaison was short-lived. No sooner had they initiated repairs and decorations, than the First consul demanded they attend to larger public projects, from the flag decoration of the chapel of the Invalides to renovating the expanding properties of the imperial crown and the long-dreamed of renovation of the Louvre and its connection to the

Tuileries Palace. The tightly controlled expenses and the constantly changing demands of Napoleon were not the only obstacles which Percier and Fontaine faced. Josephine's relentless interventions had been a source of friction for the architects from the beginning. The garden, as mentioned earlier, caused the greatest amount of trouble for the architects. As would be made clear by their subsequent publications, Percier and Fontaine favored the ordered symmetry of Italianate gardens. Josephine preferred the serpentine, meandering paths of English gardens that had gained a following in the eighteenth century.

In 1802, Jean-Baptiste Lepère was named architect of Malmaison, Lepère, who had traveled with Napoleon on the Egyptian campaign remained at Malmaison for one year with little trace of his work, before being replaced by the architect and garden theorist, Jean-Marie Morel. Author of the widely read book, *Théorie du jardin* (1776), Morel adapted many English gardening theories to a French audience, emphasizing the importance of variety and natural forms such as trees in eliciting an emotional response from the visitor. Morel's gardens often incorporated "neglected" forests, which framed and delimited the more landscaped portions of his designs.[489] Morel had been called upon by Fontaine as early as 1801 in order to satisfy Josephine's desire for a picturesque garden. Morel initiated construction on a greenhouse at Malmaison which would house Josephine's beloved exotic plants. He also constructed a picturesque Swiss chalet and a cowherd's building, a dairy and a shepherd's house, a real working miniature farm that echoed the image of rustic productivity envisioned at Marie-Antoinette's dairy at Rambouillet.[490]

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[489] Elisabette Cereghini, "Jean-Marie Morel et l'art du jardin de la nature," in Catherine de Bourgoing, *Jardins romantiques français: du jardin des Lumières au parc romantique, 1770-1840* (Paris: Paris Musées, 2011), 69-72.

[490] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 109-112.

After her divorce from Napoleon, Malmaison became a distinctive property belonging to Josephine alone. With each of his successive victories over the Hapsburgs, Napoleon's ambitions for the French empire transformed. Abandoning its republican origins, Napoleon sought to transform his reign into a legitimate hereditary monarchy, seeking to align himself with the Hapsburg empire. The emperor thus divorced Josephine, who only five years earlier had played such a prominent role in the visualization of Napoleonic power. Josephine served as the visual proxy for the iconophobic emperor, even occupying the center of David's sprawling group portrait of the imperial coronation.[491] The emperor gave portraits of the empress to conquered territories, gifting a full-length portrait of Josephine by Robert Lefevre to the city of Aachen in 1805.[492] Knowing that she could not provide Napoleon with an heir, Josephine acquiesced and divorced the emperor. As a post-divorce gift, Napoleon bestowed Malmaison upon Josephine, continuing to pay for its refurbishment out of the Imperial crown's coffers. Despite traveling to the various properties given to her by the emperor, she returned again and again to Malmaison, deciding to live there permanently after the divorce.

Rather than choosing to rid the traces of her past with Napoleon, Josephine chose to emphasize further her ties to the faltering regime. In 1805, she hired Louis-Martin Berthault, the final architect of Malmaison and its longest serving one. Berthault was a student of Percier and was a decorator and garden designer, best known as the decorator of Juliette Recamier's famed salon, a project that has also been connected with Percier. Like his professor, Berthault became a fashionable decorator for the newly wealthy financiers and army contractors, who had purchased the auctioned property of the ancien regime. Unlike Percier and Fontaine, however,

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[491] On Josephine's portrait and its ideological significance in David's painting of the coronation, see Todd Porterfield, "David's Sacre," in *Staging Empire.*

[492] Delorme, *Josephine,* 24-5.

his taste in garden design tended towards the unregulated picturesque garden, one of the main reasons that perhaps endeared Josephine to the architect. Through Berthault, Josephine undertook a vast redecoration project at Malmaison. Although he had been hired before the divorce, Berthault mainly had focused on re-landscaping the park grounds and constructing fabriques, although in 1807, Berthault built a new gallery to house Josephine's growing collection of antiques, paintings and sculptures.[493] It was only post-divorce that Berthault made one of his most memorable contributions to Malmaison: Josephine's dramatic new bedroom, the same one that she had formerly shared with Napoleon [Figure 3.54].

If Percier and Fontaine's designs at Malmaison served as a harbinger of the military glories to come, Josephine transformed the chateau into a site of nostalgia. The *salle de conseil* and the library, associated with the memory of Napoleon, were to retain their stiff and formal atmosphere, with the furnishings to remain untouched. In the opposing wing the martial motifs of the Consulate period were softened and altered into a reflection of Josephine's personal taste. The majority of Berthault's projects at Malmaison took place in the north wing, Josephine's principle living quarters. Until 1803, Josephine and Napoleon had shared the bedroom located in the north wing of the chateau, just above the salon de compagnie on the ground floor. In the room where Girodet and Gerard's homage to the French army had hung, Berthault lightened the decor of heavy mahogany and deep green velours, commissioning E.J. Delécluze to decorate the salon with four painted medallions featuring pastoral scenes, possibly drawing from the Greek novel of Daphnis and Chloe by the Greek author Longus, which had just been translated in 1810.[494] A watercolor by Henri-Charles Loeilliot Hartwig shows the salon decorated with panels featuring Pompeiian-inspired grotesques, punctuated with richly colored pilasters. Berthault's

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[493] Delorme , *Josephine*.

[494] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 125.

decorative program forms a strong contrast to the somber tones and military themes created under Percier and Fontaine during the Consulate period.

It was above, in the bedroom, where Berthault completely repurposed Percier and Fontaine's tent motif. Berthault created the effect of a circular tent through sixteen panels. Mirrors placed in opposition to each other, one on the wall overlooking the courtyard and the other set within the bed, and another mirror placed above the chimney and was reflected in the mirrored panels of the door, as shown in a colored print [Figure 3.55]. The trompe l'oeil ceiling opened to the heavens and featured a canvas painting of Juno, the jealous wife of Jupiter, riding across the sky in her chariot pulled by four white horses. The original rectangular bedroom had been decorated with painted friezes designed by Percier, evocative of Raphael's intricate decorative program at the Villa Madama. Remnants of the frieze suggest that it had a musical motif, which featured grotesque figures with butterfly wings playing various instruments. These early Consulate designs were covered over by Berthault with striped wallpaper that was to imitate the effect of canvas, with a twisted border.[495] Indeed, it seems that Josephine had a penchant for the tent as a decorative motif. Near the end of her life in 1812, she spent large sums on restoring the tent vestibule designed by Percier and Fontaine. Built in 1800, repairing the tented entrance required nearly the same amount of money that the entire billiards room cost. For Josephine, the entrance as well as the other tent-themed *salle de conseil*, were, in her view, as essential as the repairing of the heating, plumbing and kitchen.[496]

In her famed bedroom, the tent was transformed into a space of feminine retreat and a turning away from the world. Berthault designed an entire ensemble of furniture to accompany the lavish bed. The *paumiers*, a type of sofa where the arms and back were of the same height,

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[495] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 99.

[496] Chevalier, *Malmaison*, 162.

as well as the armchairs, were covered with the same luxurious red fabric as that lining the walls. The furniture was embroidered in gold with the letter "J" and surrounded by an embroidered wreath of laurels. The swans at the head of the bed resting atop cornucopia are evocative of the bed designed by Berthault for Madame Recamier. On eight of the panels of the room hung Joseph Redoute's paintings of flowers.[497]

Why, just two years before her death when she no longer had an official function as empress, did Josephine choose to redecorate and create what was essentially a representation room? And what was her attachment to the tent? Did it serve to remind her of the early part of her marriage to Napoleon, when his military glory created new hope in Republican France? Or was it the novelty and theatricality which Percier and Fontaine created in the interiors of Malmaison, which attracted her attention? Whatever her proclivities, Josephine's adoption of the tent at the end of the Empire transformed what was an early symbol of Napoleon's imperial ambitions into a cipher of exile and nostalgia. It was Hortense, Josephine's daughter and the future mother of Napoleon III, who had her private rooms and an entry vestibule painted with stripes at her home off the shores of lake Constance in Switzerland [Figure 3.56]. At Schloss Arenenberg, the tent interiors evoked Hortense's memories at Malmaison and simultaneously recalled the blue and white cotton canvas of the Napoleonic campaigns. It was ultimately the disasters of war that had led her to Arenenberg, which was not a country retreat, but a place of exile.

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[497] Chevallier, *Malmaison*, 164.

Coda
In the House of the Laborer

In this dissertation, I have sought to show how Percier and Fontaine's interior decorations placed the interior at the crux of a new architectural discourse that moved away from both a Vitruvian theory of the orders and the social hierarchy of the *ancien régime*. In the fractured context of the French Revolution, architects such as Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand sought to forge a new method of building rooted in the rational and utilitarian techniques of engineering. By contrast, Percier and Fontaine reaffirmed architecture's alliance with sculpture, painting and the decorative arts, in order to construct interiors that generated meaning independent of the outer building shell they were placed in. The reconfigured interior was a complex work of art that required the concerted efforts of architects, painters, sculptors and craftsmen. Throughout their projects, Percier and Fontaine developed what might be called a notion of the "fraternal arts," where close friendships among artists prompted collaborations and collective projects.

Percier and Fontaine envisioned the interior as a crucial site for the architectural imagination. Against the widespread destruction of monuments and buildings that Percier and Fontaine had witnessed, and participated in, during the revolution, ornament, rather than the orders, ensured architecture's survival. As they emphasized in the *Recueil*, decoration affected the very fate of architecture. The interiors featured in Percier and Fontaine's book, the R*ecueil de décorations intérieures* did not constitute reflections of the personal taste or identities of patrons. The *Recueil* represents an architecture in search of an ideal space where it could forge a narrative that was independent from the social and political events that had stripped architecture of its monumentality.

Percier and Fontaine sought to naturalize the visual ideology of the Napoleonic regime

through an aesthetic credo based in "the general laws of the true, the simple and the beautiful,

which must govern eternally over all the productions in the realm of the imitation."[498] The

architects recognized that the interior had been left virtually untouched by the spatial symbolics

of the revolution, which had placed an emphasis upon wide, open expanses and buildings

intended for the public. Drawing from their experience designing theater sets at the Opera,

Percier and Fontaine created interior compositions that could serve as potent backdrops to

Napoleonic events, such as his coronation, which were intended to rewrite the French historical

narrative. History was materialized in decorative form.

Although Percier and Fontaine sought to colonize the interior as a site of Napoleonic

power, the interior ultimately proved to be a porous site of meaning that could not be claimed as

the domain of imperial force alone. Perhaps the Napoleonic anecdote that architecture was the

"ruin of sovereigns" proved prophetic. The Emperor of the French was eventually exiled to Elba

and then finally to the remote island of St. Helena in 1814, following the Hundred Days.[499]

Upon being crowned king, Louis XVIII adapted the interiors that had been constructed for the

emperor for his own uses. The Bourbon king demanded that the Napoleonic initials that had

been carved throughout the Louvre and other royal palaces be effaced.[500] In the end, Napoleonic

power did not reside in the monumental spaces of palaces, but rather in the circulation of

mementos, calendars and mobile images of popular culture. And despite Percier and Fontaine's

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[498] Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil*, 7.

[499] On the political significance of building Napoleon's tomb at Les Invalides, see Michael Driskel, *As Befits a Legend : Building a Tomb for Napoleon, 1840-1861* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993).

[500] For the shifting political meanings of art work in the context of the Bourbon restoration, see Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Imago Belli: Horace Vernet's L'Atelier as an Image of Radical Militarism Under the Restoration." *The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 2 (June 1, 1986): 268–280. For the Bourbon restoration's search for new political heroes, see Kimberly Jones, "Henri IV and the Decorative Arts of the Bourbon Restoration, 1814-1830: A Study in Politics and Popular Taste," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 1:1 (October 1, 1993): 2–21.

attempts to align their designs with the noble principles of antiquity, the pages of the *Recueil* too

participated in the construction of Napoleon as a popular hero in print.[501]

Ultimately, Percier and Fontaine's lasting contribution to architecture was to draw

attention to the interior and its decoration as a site of artistic conceptualization. It is for this

reason that I end with the platinum cabinet (1800-1804) that they designed for the Casa del

Labrador in Aranjuez [Figure 4.1]. This "cabinet" is actually a small, self-enclosed room with a

fully furnished interior, built in Paris and transported to Spain. Although it is not

chronologically the last interior project they designed together, it is the most significant

realization of their aesthetic. The cabinet was commissioned in 1800 by King Charles IV of

Spain as a part of the renovation of his country retreat, the Casa del Labrador, or House of the

Laborer. Featured prominently in the pages of the *Recueil*, the project has commonly been

studied as a reflection of the Spanish king's taste and the important place of French design in the

development of a Spanish Neoclassical aesthetic in the decorative arts.[502] The exorbitant sums

spent upon the cabinet on the eve of the Peninsular War (1808-1814) can also be read as the

monarch's utter blindness to the precarious political and financial situation of the Spanish crown.

Beyond a reflection of royal patronage, I argue that the cabinet represents the moment

when architecture is materialized purely as an interior, detached from any grounded and

immobile outer building. The cabinet was produced at the threshold of two different modalities

of power: the *ancien regime* way of life maintained by Charles IV and Napoleon's modern

empire. In contrast to the pared down military motifs on display at the first consul's country

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[501] Barbara Ann Day-Hickman, *Napoleonic Art : Nationalism and the Spirit of Rebellion in France (1815-1848)* (Newark: University of Delaware Press ; 1999). For the popularity of Napoleonic battles in print, see Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-century France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

[502] Javier Jordán de Urríes y de la Colina, *La Real Casa Del Labrador De Aranjuez* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 2009).

house at Malmaison, Percier chose to deploy an arsenal of ornaments and decorations to convey

a sense of ultimate luxury and material splendor. The most significant aspect of the cabinet is

not its incorporation of rare and precious materials or the refined compositional arrangement of

decorative motifs, but rather, its absolute disregard for the building in which it was inserted. The

cabinet does not communicate with or reference the outside. As a room containing its own

enclosure, it claims to be self-sufficient. It is an architecture turned inwards, seeking to construct

a decorative language no longer dependent upon outward referents or sources of signification.

Despite the platinum cabinet's prominent place in the *Recueil*, Percier and Fontaine did

not recall the circumstances of the commission with fondness. In *Résidences de souverains*, they

wrote that Charles IV had happened to hear French furnishings being praised and commissioned

a French worker to "have executed the construction and complete decoration of a cabinet in the

richest and rarest of materials, in the most precious woods."[503] The architects enlisted the help of

Anne-Louis Girodet, "one of our best painters" and other members of the team they had worked

with at Malmaison, in an effort to create a refined interior constructed in Paris. For Percier and

Fontaine, the problem with the interior did not lie in its conception or execution, but in the initial

commission of the monarch. The architects mentioned the project not "as a model of industry

and of French taste, but by contrast, as an example of the hardly advantageous and often fatal

consequences to which one is exposed in treating, as did the king of Spain, the detached parts of

the decoration and the arrangement of his habitation as objects of commerce."[504]

Charles IV had originally intended the Casa del Labrador as a simple, rustic retreat. The

maison de plaisance was built in 1794 near the royal family's official summer residence at

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[503] Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains : Parellèle entre plusieurs résidences de souverains de France, d'Allemagne, de Suède, de Russie, d'Espagne, et d'Italie* (Hildesheim, Germany: G. Olms, 1973 [Reprint]), 235.

[504] Percier and Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains*, 235.

Aranjuez, located 48 kilometers outside of Madrid. The pastoral landscape of Aranjuez was a favorite spot of the king, who sought to escape from the formalities of palace life. The name for the Casa del Labrador likely came from the king's predilection for "descending into the low life," as one English visitor described it: "Nothing delights the good-natured monarch so much as a pretense for descending into low life, and creeping out of sight of the court, his council, and his people; therefore, Madrid is almost totally abandoned by him, and many capricious buildings are stating up in every secluded corner of the royal parks and gardens."[505] According to visitors, the king enjoyed cooking meals himself and tilling the soil with his own hands.[506] Charles IV commissioned royal architect Juan de Villanueva with building the house on an area of the royal grounds near the Tagus River called the "Island of Palomeros," which was within walking distance to the hermit's house, a *folie* that had been erected in the prince's garden in 1793. Initially, there seemed to be a stylistic continuity between the picturesque rusticity conjured by the little recluse's thatched hut and the laborer's house, where the king hoped to spend his afternoons and take his lunch (he would return to the principal summer palace to retire). The initial design by Villanueva consisted of a single rectangular block, with a ground floor, first and second floor. A tile roof covered the attic story. The coach house was contained in an additional block placed perpendicularly to the principal part of the building. An image from 1798 by Isidro Velázquez [Figure 4.2] shows a low wall separating the building's grounds from the surrounding rural expanse.[507]

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[505] Javier Jordán de Urríes y de la Colina, "Charles IV's Taste at his Country Houses," in Briget Marx, ed. *Royal Splendor in the Enlightenment : Charles IV of Spain, Patron and Collector* (Dallas, Tex.: Meadows Museum, SMU, 2010), 59.

[506] Jordán de Urríes, "Charles IV's Taste," 70.

[507] Jordán de Urríes. *La Real Casa*, 62.

Beginning in 1798, the king decided to expand and formalize the Casa del Labrador. The facade was regularized through the construction of parallel wings on the east and west sides of the original building. Villanueva and his disciple Isidro Velasquez added arcaded balconies and decorated the principal facade with plaques, bas-reliefs and niches containing sculptures [Figure 4.3]. The interior arrangement also reflected the new emphasis on formality. The decoration campaign, which lasted until Charles IV's abdication in 1808, began with a ceremonial "Etruscan hall" built on the first floor. The newly added west wing housed the billiard room, decorated with ornate silks, and a sculpture gallery that was to house commissioned figures by Canova.[508] A series of smaller rooms running parallel to each other divided the east wing, which was decorated throughout by stucco moldings and tempera ceiling paintings by Spanish artists. This wing terminates in the platinum cabinet, which was connected to the king's water closet, decorated with whimsical grotesques painted by Velazquez and based upon the Vatican Loggia.[509] Despite the luxurious materials contained in each of the rooms, the small scale of the building lends a diminutive quality to the entire decor. The overall theme of the decorative program emphasizes the Spanish locale, seen in the Iberian landscapes painted by Zacarías Gonzalez Velasquez in the "stud room" (named after the horses featured in Velasquez's paintings) in the east wing, as well as in the silk embroideries hanging in the company room located in the principal block. Produced by the Lyons silk manufacturer Camille Pernon and designed by the French ancien régime architect Jean-Démosthène Dugourc, the wall embroideries feature squares and octagons containing different views, including the king's various estates in Spain. The king took an active interest in the refurbishment of the house, to

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[508] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 117-121. The figures were ultimately not placed in the gallery because of Charles IV's abdication in 1808 in favor of his son and rival Ferdinand VII, and the beginning of the Peninsular War the same year.

[509] Jordán de Urries, "Charles IV's Taste," 71.

such a degree that he demanded that the hind legs of a chair be changed in order to resemble the front, and that the color of the architectural moldings be changed from "porcelain" to pink.[510]

More than solely a reflection of royal dilettantism, Charles IV's desire to incorporate an interior by French artists has been viewed as a diplomatic maneuver on the part of the monarch, in an attempt to reaffirm Spain's commercial and political connections with the Consulate government ruling France.[511] As Percier and Fontaine indicate, the king's intention was to have distinctly French furniture as a part of his newly refurbished retreat. On February 26, 1800, Charles IV issued a royal order, commanding the French goldsmith Michel-Léonard Sitel to construct a cabinet for his country house. Sitel, who had arrived in Madrid in 1799, played multiple roles in the project. He acted as a *marchand-mercier*, responsible for procuring the furniture and ornaments that were to be designed in Paris. He was also an entrepreneur, hoping to secure a profit by investing his own money in the venture.[512] Sitel seems to have had a free choice as to who to employ on the project. He chose Percier and Fontaine, who had been gaining increasing recognition for their work at Malmaison.[513] The project grew in scope when the king issued a royal order on November 29, 1800, to expand the project to include a ceiling, table, chairs and a paved floor. The king himself personally requested the design for the ceiling vaulted "en berceau."[514] An increasing number of ambassadors, finance officers and other officials became involved in overseeing the project as it became more expensive and complex.

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[510] Jordán de Urriés, "Charles IV's Taste," 56.

[511] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 105.

[512] Chantal Gastinel-Coural, "Le Cabinet de platine de la Casa del Labrador à Aranjuez. Documents inédits." *Bulletin de La Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Francais* (1993): 184. Although it is unclear how precisely the commission fell to Percier and Fontaine, Gastinel-Coural conjectures that the architects' names were suggested by Napoleon's brother Lucien Bonaparte, then the French ambassador to Spain. As Gastinel-Coural notes, Sitel and the entire project was plagued with financial difficulties, with the king refusing to pay for Sitel's services.

[513] Gastinet-Coural, "Le Cabinet de platine," 189.

[514] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 104.

For example, Ignacio Muzquiz, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, was put in charge of procuring the cabinet's four designs, two colored and two in outlines, done by Percier in 1801.[515] The costly nature of the project undoubtedly attracted the attention of French officials. Shortly after Charles IV commissioned the cabinet, the First Consul sent him a platinum coin.[516]

The most remarkable aspect of the project was that, with the exception of the marble floor, it was constructed in Paris and shipped to Aranjuez.[517] Transporting the cabinet in its entirety to Spain indicates Percier and Fontaine's desire to maintain control over the project. Furthermore, Sitel could hardly have coordinated the meticulous assembly of decorative motifs, ornaments and paintings that the cabinet required. Percier held the artistic reigns. José Martínez de Hervás, the commissioner of the Spanish royal treasury in Paris overseeing the project, called Percier one of the most sought after architects in France. In addition, it was only through Percier that the other artists included on the project could have participated. Hervás noted the other artists working for the architect: the *ébéniste* Jacob, the history painter Girodet and the architecture and landscape painters Bidault and Thibault.[518] Hervás described the status of the project in a letter to the court sent on May 4, 1802. He wrote that because of the "exactitude of the execution, the multitude of little things, and the type of finishing," the cabinet would not be completed until November of the next year.[519] The cabinet ended up missing that estimated deadline. It was not completed until the summer of 1804, at which point Percier and Fontaine had begun to devote their careers exclusively to Napoleonic commissions. The construction of

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[515] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 106.

[516] Jordán de Urriés, La Real Casa, 105. Upon closer inspection, treasury officials found the quality of the platinum to be inferior.

[517] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 178.

[518] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 107.

[519] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 107.

the vault was particularly difficult, because of its delicate semicircular shape nonetheless had to be built to withstand the trip to Spain.[520] On June 26, 1804, Sitel departed Paris with the cabinet, dissembled and transported by eight carts. The shipment arrived in Aranjuez a month and a half later, on August 8. Sitel and four other workers installed the cabinet, complete with paintings, from August 19 to that November.[521]

The cabinet at Aranjuez is the subject of four successive plates featured in the penultimate cahier of the *Recueil*. In their explanation, Percier and Fontaine explain how "Everything is done with extreme research and precision." They describe the mirrors that cover the gable compartments found at the ends of the room, "multiplying the expanse of the vault, and repeat to infinity the riches of the sides." Plate 61 shows the cabinet in perspective, capturing the intended effect of extension found in the reflection of the vaulted ceiling in the demi-lunette mirror compartments [Figure 4.4]. Plate 62 [Figure 4.5] shows the entablature, capital and details from the cabinet while the following plate [Figure 4.6] shows an arrangement of architectural details and furniture, including a chair, tripod and vase, seen in profile. Plate 64 [Figure 4.7] shows the decorative scheme of the ceiling, reflected earlier in plate 61. The cabinet could not have been further in design from even the most lavish decorative schemes found at Malmaison, seen in earlier plates of the *Recueil*.

No legible overarching theme is discernable in the cabinet except the exuberance of ornament itself. In the actual constructed cabinet, the royal presence of Charles IV is made visible through his initial, and that of his wife, Maria Louisa Theresa [Figure 4.8], tacked onto the platinum and gilded bronze border (created by the bronzier Pierre-Auguste Forrestier) running around the cabinet. By contrast, the royal couple's initials are absent in the plates of the

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[520] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 107-9.

[521] Jordán de Urriés, *La Real Casa*, 110.

Recueil. Instead, plate 61 of the *Recueil* depicts a frieze with stars set within laurel wreaths. The door of the cabinet, painted by Jacques Barraband, [Figure 4.9] includes emblems of the Spanish monarchy, including the arms of Aragon, the lion of Leon and the necklace of the order of the Golden Fleece. However, as shown in the *Recueil*, these references to Charles IV form only a minor part of a larger decorative ensemble ordered by a sophisticated compositional arrangement. In both the plates of the *Recueil* and the actual site, there is no real point of visual entry into the cabinet, as the eye seeks to order space and surface into separate categories. Instead, the composition dissolves into a series of square and circle shapes being mirrored and distorted.

The full effect of the cabinet can only be experienced when viewed first hand. The extreme smallness of the room, which measures only around 12 square meters, creates a compression of space. The effect of the decorations is amplified, as the platinum and gilded bronze ornaments glimmer against the warm backdrop of amaranth, mahogany and satinwood paneling (the chandelier was added later - one must imagine what it must have been like to enter the cabinet by candlelight).[522] The mirrors that have been placed at the vaults create a counter-intuitive extension of space in a location where one would expect there to be a terminating wall. It is impossible to view the decoration of the cabinet at a "proper distance." For just at the point that you imagine seeing the room in its entirety, you are obstructed by a painting or ornamented wall.

Structure gives way to the materiality and color of surfaces, emphasized above all by the privileged place of the paintings by Girodet, Thibault and Bidault [Figure 4.10]. As scholars have noted, Girodet sought to develop a mode of painting that explored the subtlety and

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[522] For the significance of candlelight in the sociability of the interior, see Mimi Hellman, "Enchanted Night: Decoration, Sociability and Visuality after Dark," in *Paris : Life & Luxury in the Eighteenth Century* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 91-114.

sensuality of color and the depiction of diaphanous light, in direct opposition to his teacher

David's emphasis on outlines.[523] Such techniques, as we saw, were employed in his painting for

the *salle de compagnie* at Malmaison. At Aranjuez, Girodet's depiction of the four seasons

constitutes the central zone of panels in the cabinet. *Spring* and *Summer* are located on either

side of the entrance door to the cabinet. [Figure 4.11] *Fall* and *Winter* have been placed on the

side of the window overlooking the garden. [Figure 4.12] Charles Landon included a notice on

the paintings in his review of the Salon of 1808. He described Girodet as having depicted the

seasons "d'une manière neuve."[524] Landon quotes from François Noël's *Dictionnaire*

mythologique (1803), a text in which Girodet was actively involved.[525] For the allegorical

figures, Girodet was inspired by paintings known as the "dancers of Herculaneum," which had

been printed in the *Antichità di Ercolano* (1757-1792).[526] *Spring*, balanced on the wings of the

Zephyr, is delicately wrapped in a "verdant gauze" and plays Cupid's lyre.[527] *Summer* is

personified by a male figure. His hair is comprised of a burst of flames and he holds in one of

his hands an urn containing abundant waters. From the midst of his green clothing, he "lets

escape a liberally golden harvest."[528] *Autumn* is depicted as a goddess, letting the fruits of the

autumn harvest fall from her hair. In one hand, she lifts her hair while with the other hand she

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[523] Thomas Crow, *Emulation : Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). For Girodet in the context of the Napoleonic Empire, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities : Painting Empire in Post-revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

[524] Charles Landon, *Annales du Musée et de l'École moderne des beaux-arts: Salon de 1808* (Paris: De l'imprimerie des Annales du musée, 1808), 43.

[525] Jacques Kuhnmunch, *Girodet à Compiègne : Les Décors* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2005), 23.

[526] Kuhnmunch, *Girodet à Compiègne,* 20. Percier later bequeathed to Fontaine four sketches of the seasons by Girodet at his death. The sketches were likely for the paintings at Aranjuez, since Percier principally bequeathed to Fontaine drawings and papers that related to their professional work together. Gastinel-Coural, "Le Cabinet de platine," 198, note 38.

[527] Landon, *Annales du Musée*, 43.

[528] Landon, *Annales du Musée*, 44.

"presses with love her fecund breast."[529] *Winter* is shown as an old man putting out a torch

"from which emanates creative heat" with his bare feet.[530] Girodet also painted four smaller

paintings for the cabinet in Aranjuez. Four medallions featuring children were placed on the

mirror panels located on the opposing pair of walls (one of them is missing). The remaining

medallions feature a boy playing a mandolin, a boy holding a card, and a young girl reading from

the *Decameron*, the fourteenth-century text written by Boccaccio.

Despite Girodet's acknowledged references to Herculaneum, the oil paintings in the

cabinet create an effect altogether different from ancient fresco wall paintings. The allegorical

figures work in tandem with the landscape paintings placed below them in order to depict the

seasons in different representational registers, a technique reminiscent of Percier's vignettes for

Didot l'aîné's luxury edition of Horace. These paintings provide the thematic overtone to the

room, at the same time that they frame the decorative passages of metal ornament and painted

wood panels. The paintings are neither more nor less important than the other elements of the

decor. However, the intense black paint found in the backdrop to Girodet's paintings creates an

unsettling void in the midst of a cabinet otherwise crowded with forms. The placement of the

painted medallions on the mirror panels creates an obstruction to a clear line of vision, forcing

the viewer's gaze to the paintings rather than a reflection of the self. Charles IV was not

particularly fond of Girodet's paintings. He asked Mariano Salvador Maella to paint the seasons,

in order to replace the panels by Girodet.[531] [Figure 4.13] Seeing Maella's paintings

(temporarily mounted in the place of Girodet's allegorical figures by curators) shows just how

the black punctuates the space of the cabinet, creating an uncanny painted emptiness in the midst

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[529] Landon, *Annales du Musée*, 45.

[530] Landon, *Annales du Musée*, 46.

[531] Jordan de Urríes, *La Real Casa*, 112.

of optical diversions created from the contrasting play of surfaces. Whereas Maella's figures stand on firm ground, Girodet's spring, summer, fall and winter rest their feet tenuously upon clouds that seem as if they might dissipate with the slightest breath. There is nothing "behind" Girodet's paintings but a solid field of darkness.

The chiaroscuro effect of the cabinet is achieved through the darkness of Girodet's painting contrasting with the brilliance of ornament, captured above all in the platinum pieces dispersed throughout the cabinet. [Figure 4.14] Platinum had not been utilized as the thematic element of a decor before. The material had only been actively mined beginning in the eighteenth century in the Spanish colonies in America, just a few decades before the cabinet was constructed. Under the patronage of Charles IV's father, the French chemist François-Pierre Chabaneau in 1786 discovered a way of isolating platinum and making it malleable. The difficulty of working with platinum gives the ornaments crafted by Forrestier an added significance. It shows a mastery of a precious and difficult material. Ironically, the expensive nature of the cabinet allowed it to survive intact during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Fearing that it would be destroyed, the curators of the palace removed the entire cabinet and kept it hidden in Figueres, a city located in Catalonia.[532] When it was placed in its original location, only one of the medallion paintings by Girodet and a few pieces of ornament had gone missing.

No other room more actively contradicts the king's predilection for "descending into the low life" than the cabinet. It is shocking in its utter visual splendor, despite all of the competing forms of ornamentation and luxury found in the other rooms of the Casa del Labrador. Part of its distinction seems to come from the strange placement of the room within the house. For it is surprising to enter from the Christ room on one side and to exit the platinum cabinet in order to

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[532] Jordan de Urríes, *La Real Casa*, 182.

end up at the king's bathroom. The cabinet serves no real function or purpose in the casa except as a showpiece of French achievement in the decorative arts.

The platinum cabinet is an architecture purely of the interior. It refuses its constructed setting in the Casa del Labrador, seeking the source of its meaning from its internal composition and system of decoration. The cabinet represents the search for an architecture that cannot be destroyed, an architecture that does not depend upon forces outside of its control for its foundation. On the one hand, the portability of the cabinet can be connected to what Percier and Fontaine deemed the negative effects of commerce, of being able to purchase mobile forms of architecture unmoored from their proper setting or character. On the other hand, the cabinet can be read as an architecture with no exterior, where its endurance resides in its mobility, the fact that it does not need a fixed ground. In a final reversal, the cabinet's source of permanence does not come from a monumental language of pyramids, columns or arches, but is fused in its ornaments, made from a rare element that cannot easily be destroyed.

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Illustrations
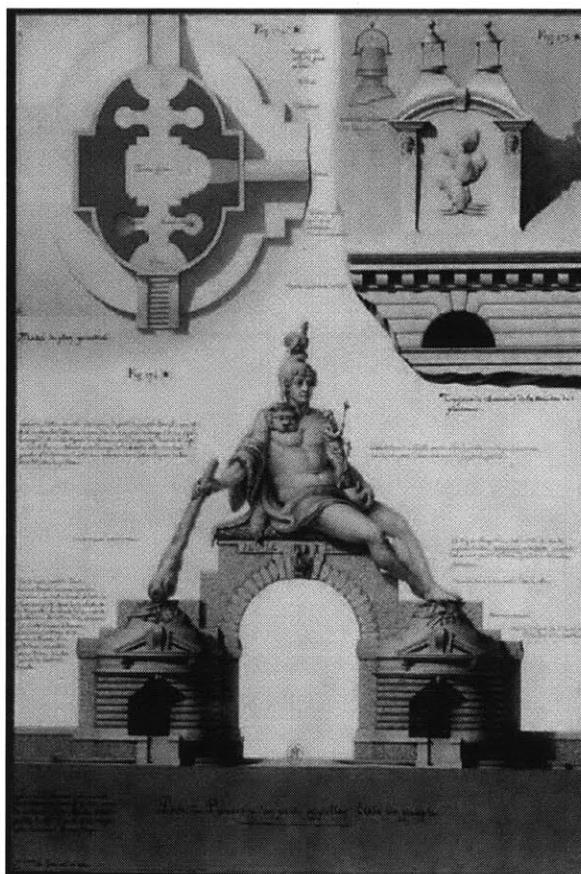
0.1 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, La Porte de Paris, 1986, in Werner Szambien, *Les projets de l'an II,* 56.
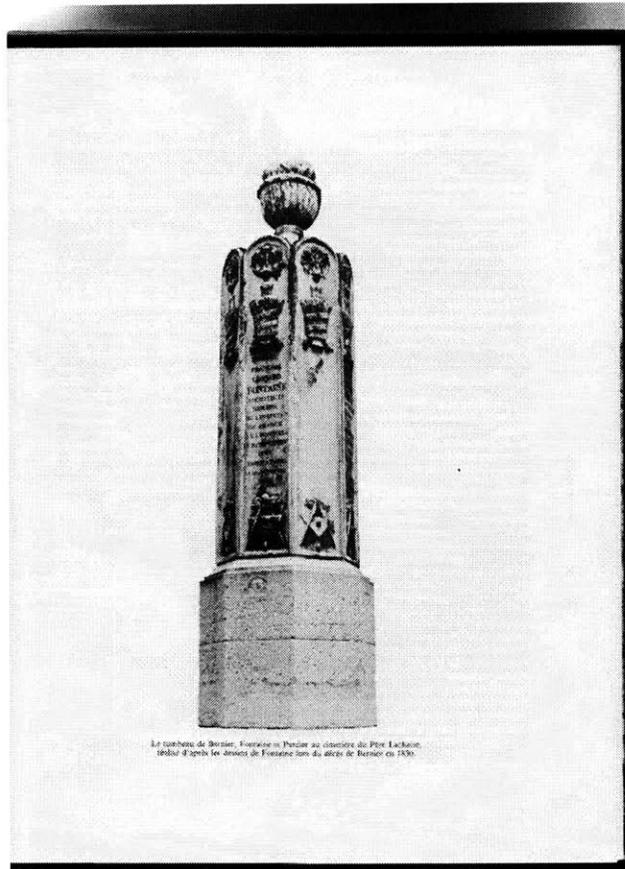
Le tombeau de Bernier, Fontaine et Percier au cimetière du Père Lachaise,
réalisé d'après les dessins de Fontaine lors du décès de Bernier en 1830.

1.1 Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, Tombstone of Percier, Bernier and
Fontaine, ca. 1830, Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France.
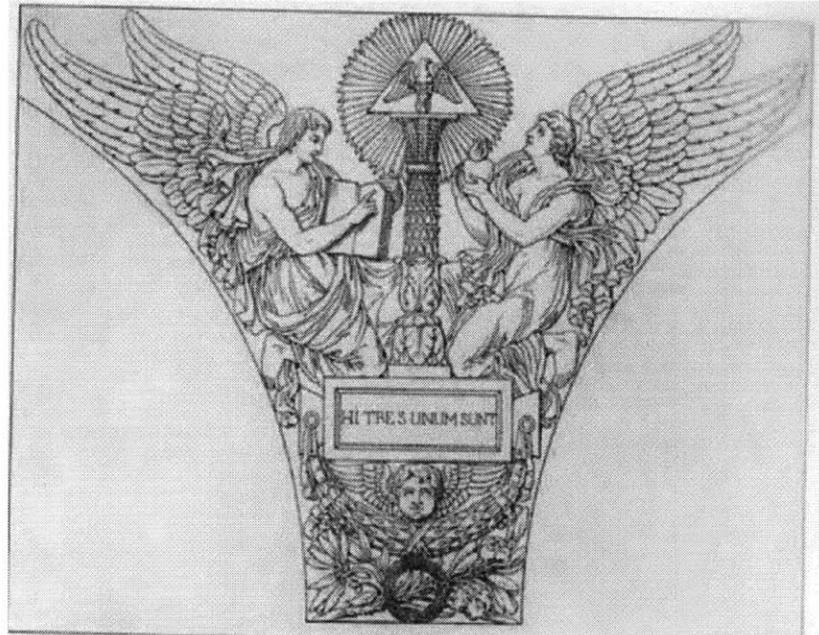
1.2 Normand fils, engraving of *Chapelle expiatoire* (detail of pendentive), in Monuments funéraires choisis dans les cimitières de Paris, 1832, plate 72.
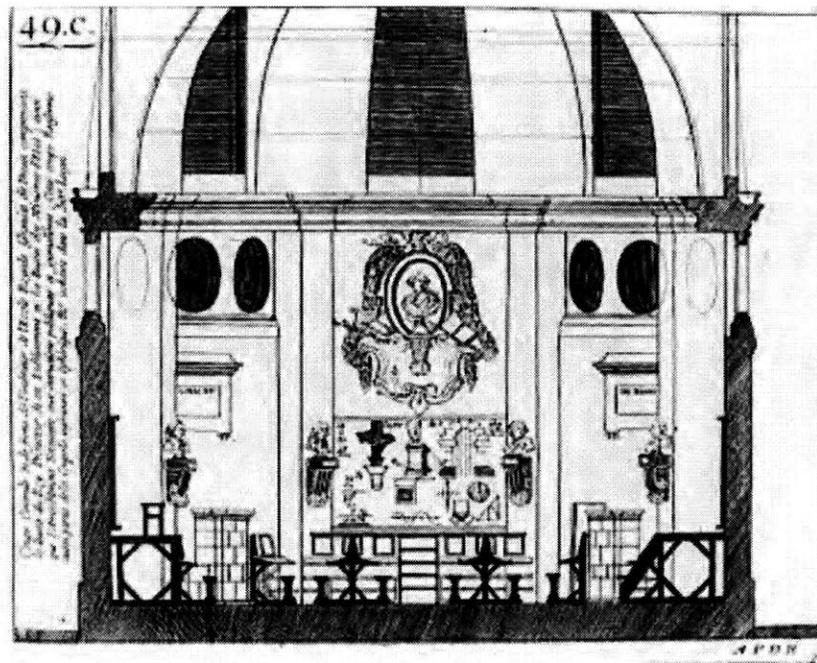
1.3 Section of the École royale gratuite de dessin, date unknown, private collection, from Ulrich Leben, *Object Design in the Age of Enlightenment*, 63.
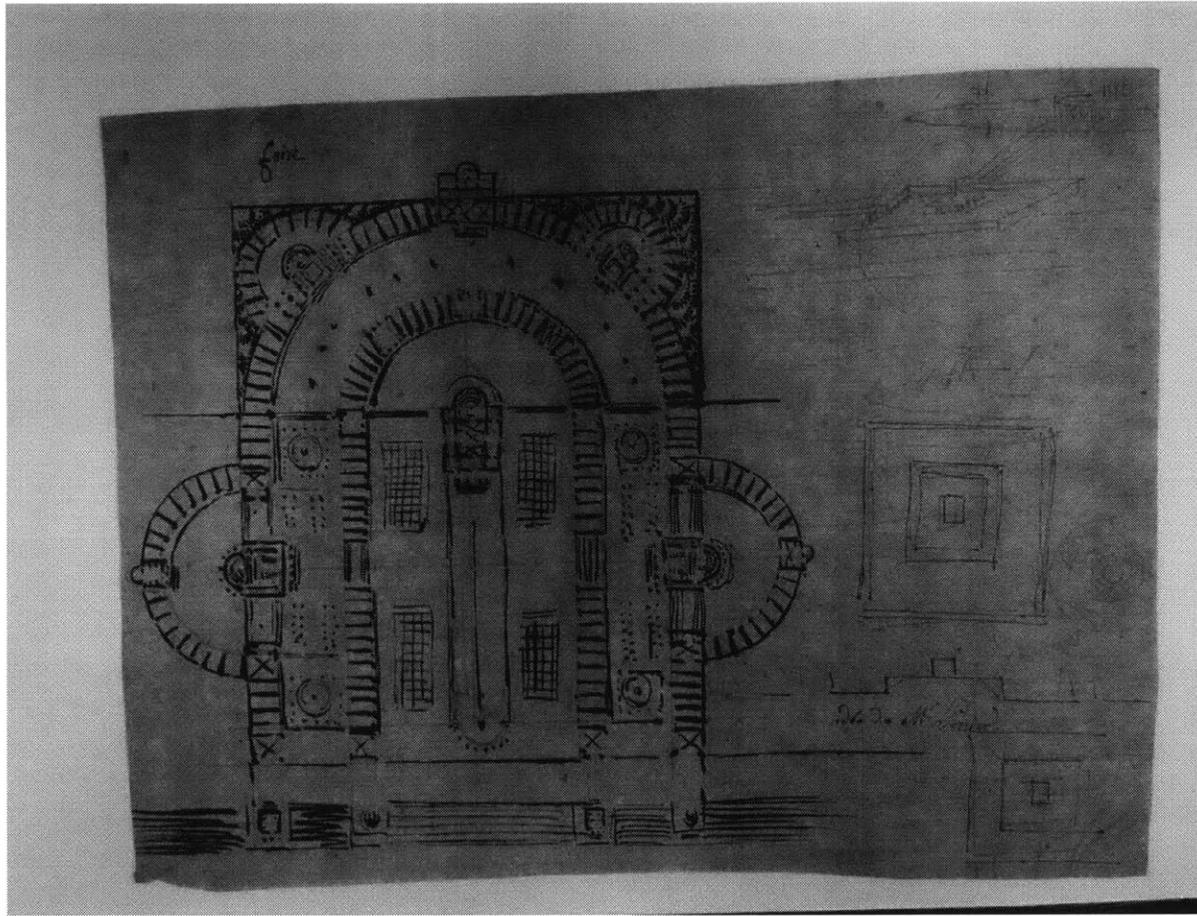
1.4 Scrapbook of sketches (detail of page marked "idée de M. Percier"), The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, 1963, Accession Number 63.535, Drawings and Prints Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.
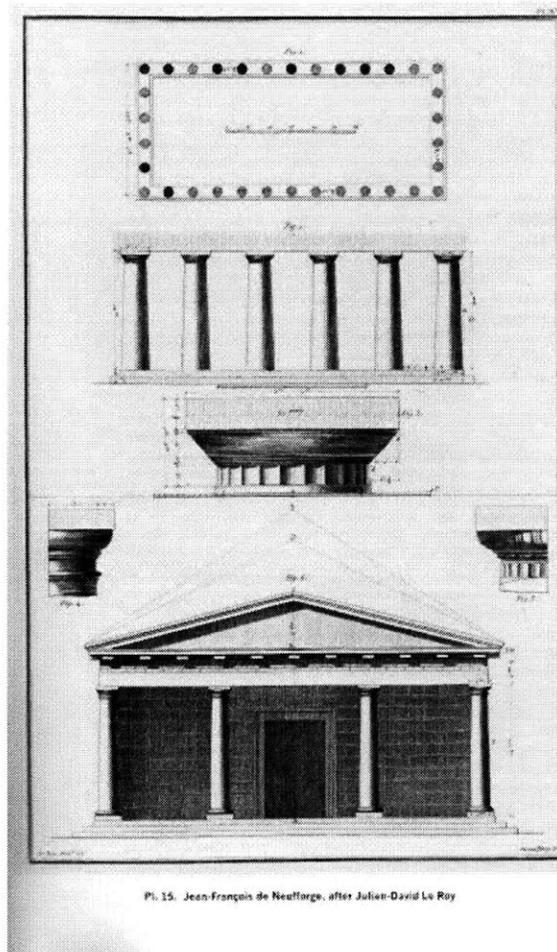
Pl. 15. Jean-François de Neufforge, after Julien-David Le Roy

1.5 Julien David Le Roy, plate from *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce,* 1758.
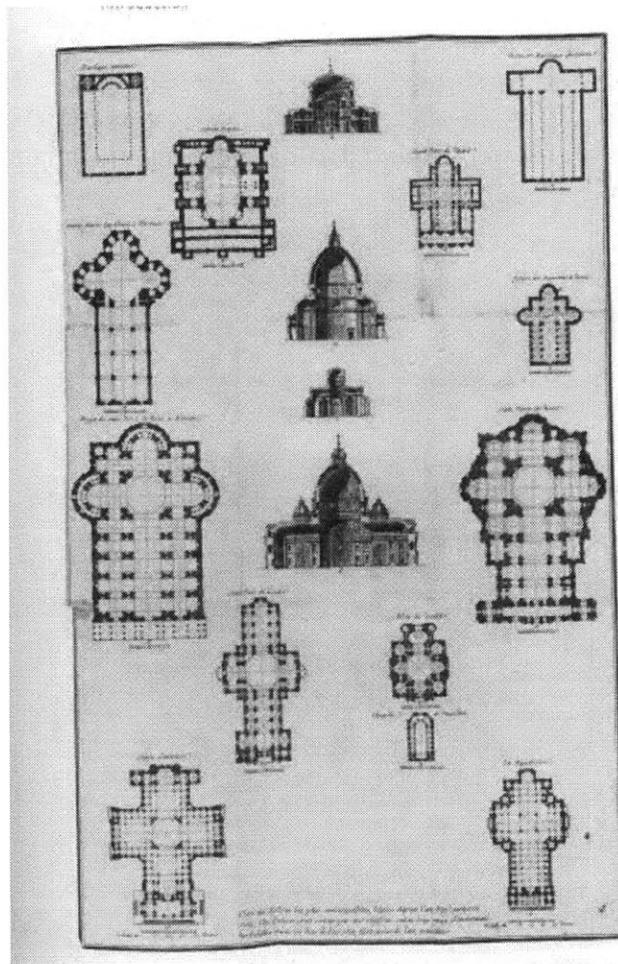
1.6 Julien David Le Roy, plate from *Histoire de la disposition et des formes différentes que les chrétiens ont données à leurs temples: depuis le Règne de Constantin Le Grand, jusqu'à nous*, 1764.

VOYAGE PITTORESQUE

OU

DESCRIPTION DES ROYAUMES

DE

NAPLES ET DE SICILE.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE DU PREMIER VOLUME,

CONTENANT

Un Précis Historique de leurs Révolutions. Les Cartes, Plans & Vues du Royaume
& de la Ville de Naples. Ses Palais, ses Églises, ses Tombeaux.

Ses Poètes, Peintres & Musiciens célèbres. Le Vésuve, avec l'Histoire de ses Éruptions les plus connues.
Les Mœurs & Usages du Peuple Napolitain, ainsi qu'une idée de son Gouvernement,
du Commerce & des Productions naturelles de ce Pays.

A PARIS.

M. DCC. LXXXI.

AVEC APPROBATION, ET PRIVILÈGE DU ROI.

1.7 Jean Claude Richard de Saint-Non, *Voyage pittoresque, ou Description des royaumes de Naples et Sicile*, 1781-6.
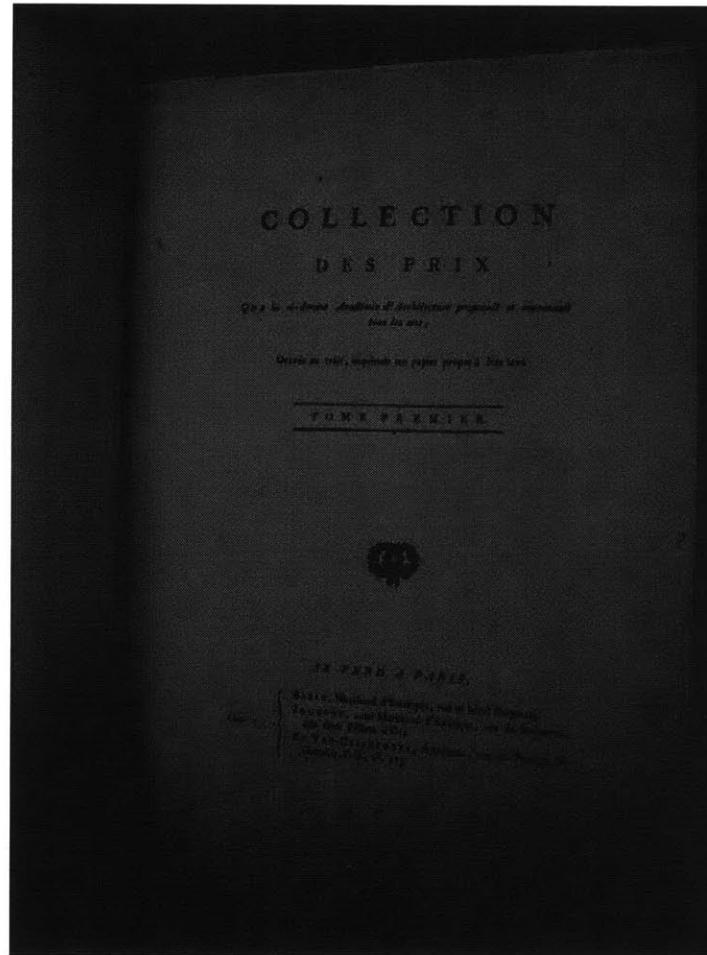
1.8 Armand Parfait Prieur and Pierre-Louis Van Cléemputte. *Collection des prix que la ci-devant Académie d'architecture proposoit et couronnoit tous les ans* (1791), 84-B13545, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

1.9 Charles Percier, *Design for a Prince's House*, 1782, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
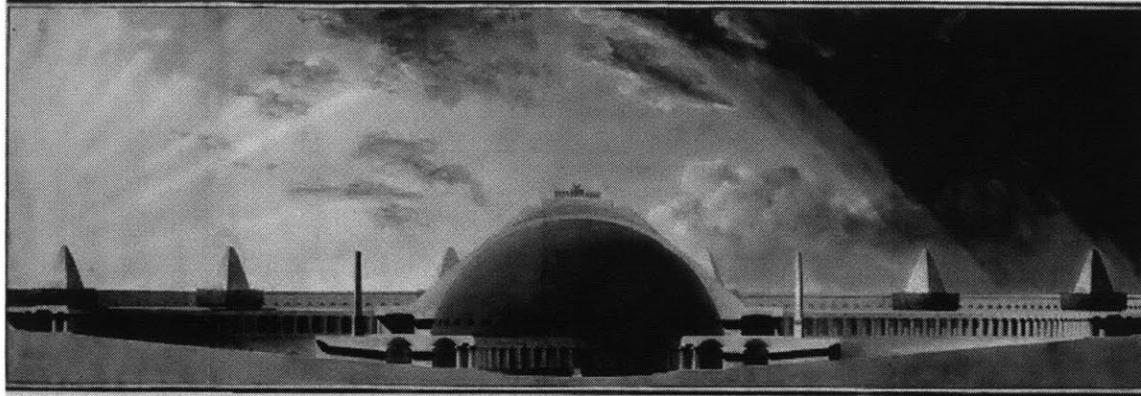
1.10 Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Design for a Sovereign's Tomb*, 1785, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
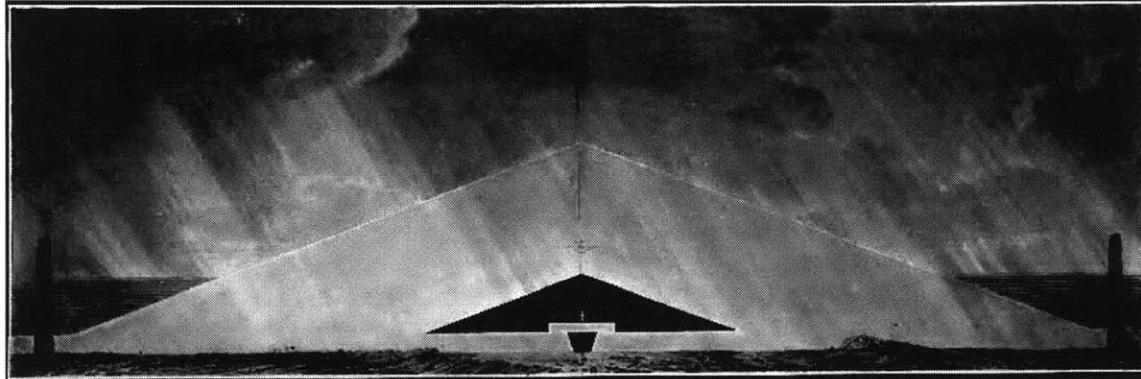
1.11 Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Design for a Sovereign's Tomb* (detail), 1785, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.

1.12 Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Funerary Monument*, n.d., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France.
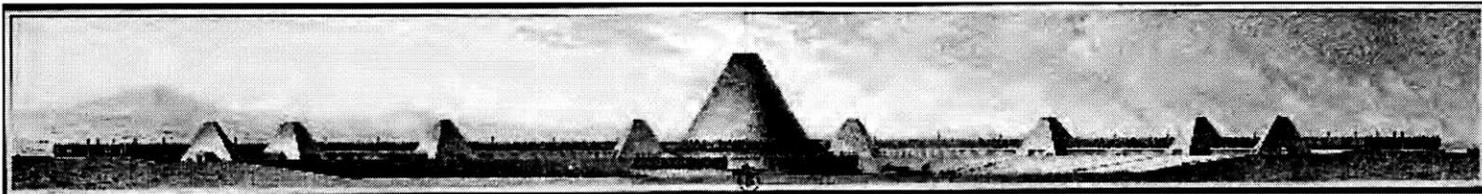
1.13 Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Cénotaphe tronconique*, n.d., Bibliothèque nationale.
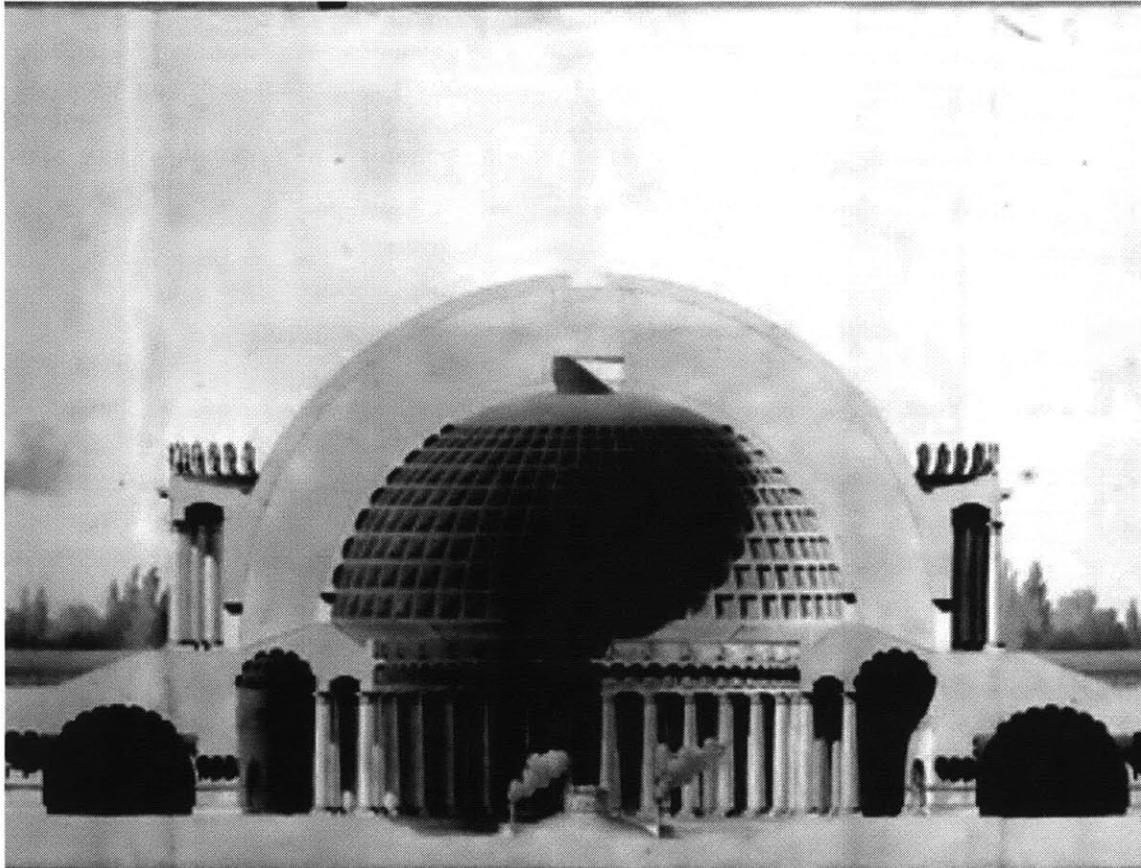
1.14 Charles Moreau, *Design for a Sovereign's Tomb*, 1785, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
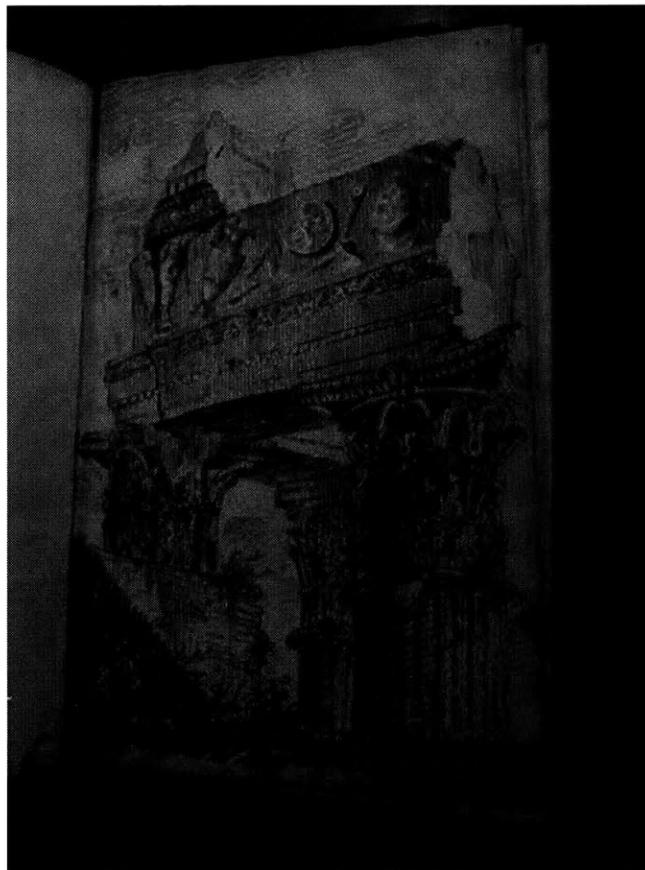
1.15 Marie-Joseph Peyre, "Recueil de Morceau d'architecture et de divers fragmens de monumens antiques faite en Italie par Marie Joseph Peyre architecte du Roy ancient pensionnaire de sa majesté à Rome 1786," ID 86-A45, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.
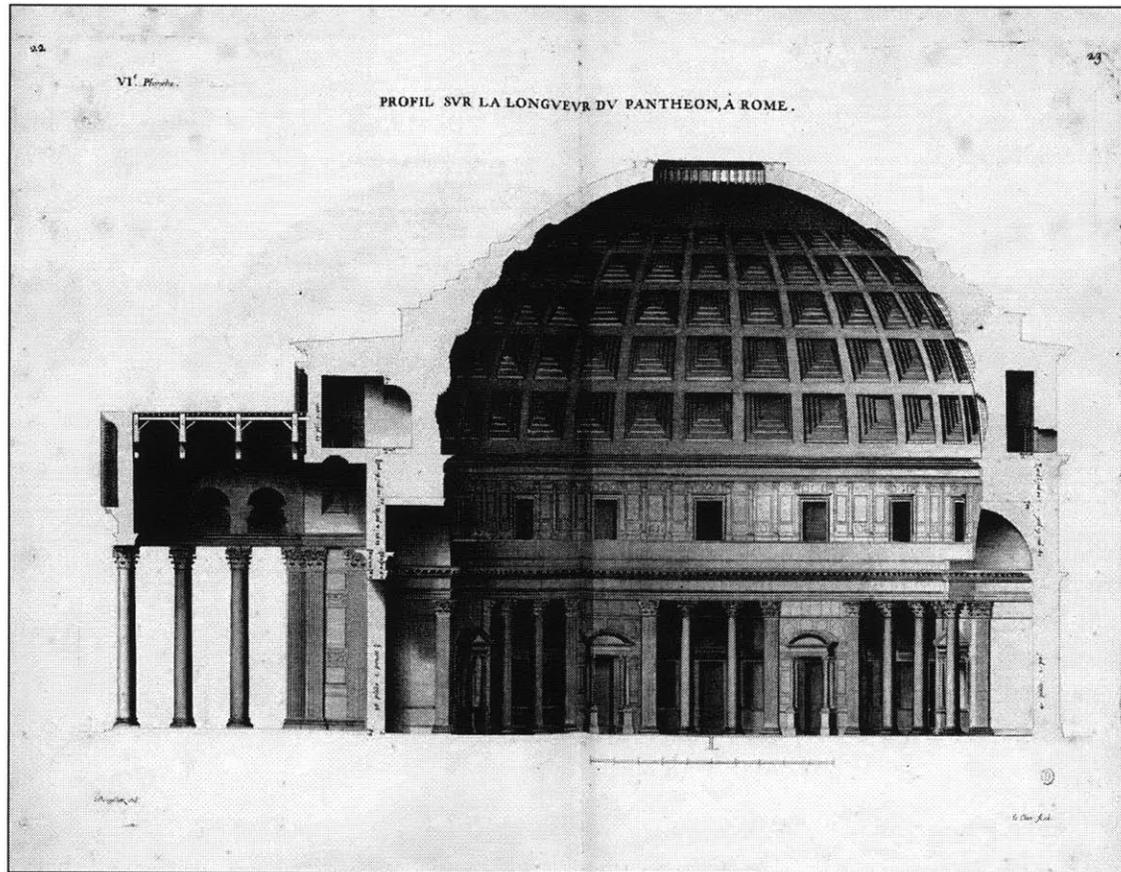
1.16 Antoine Babuty Desgodetz, *Les édifices de Rome: dessinés et mésurés très exactement*, 1682.
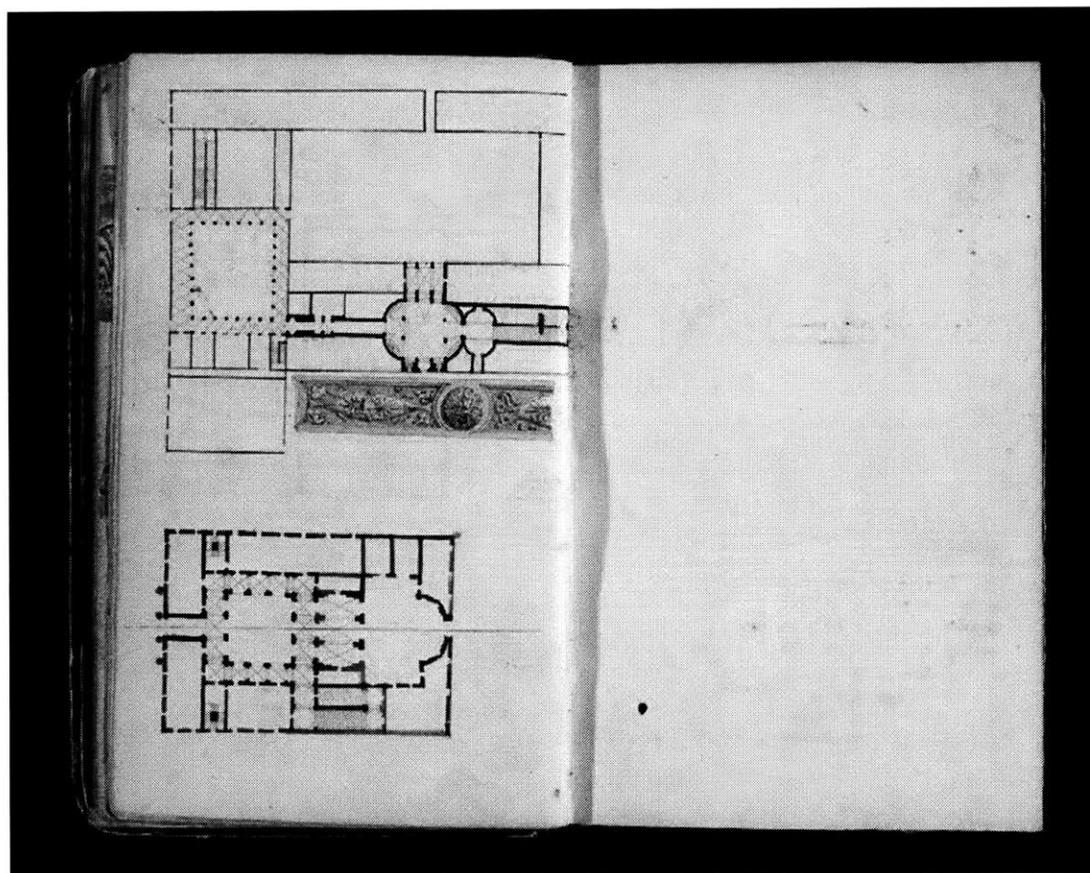
1.17 Charles Percier (attributed), *A sketchbook dated to around 1790* (detail of the Villa Doria Pamphili), ID 950016, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
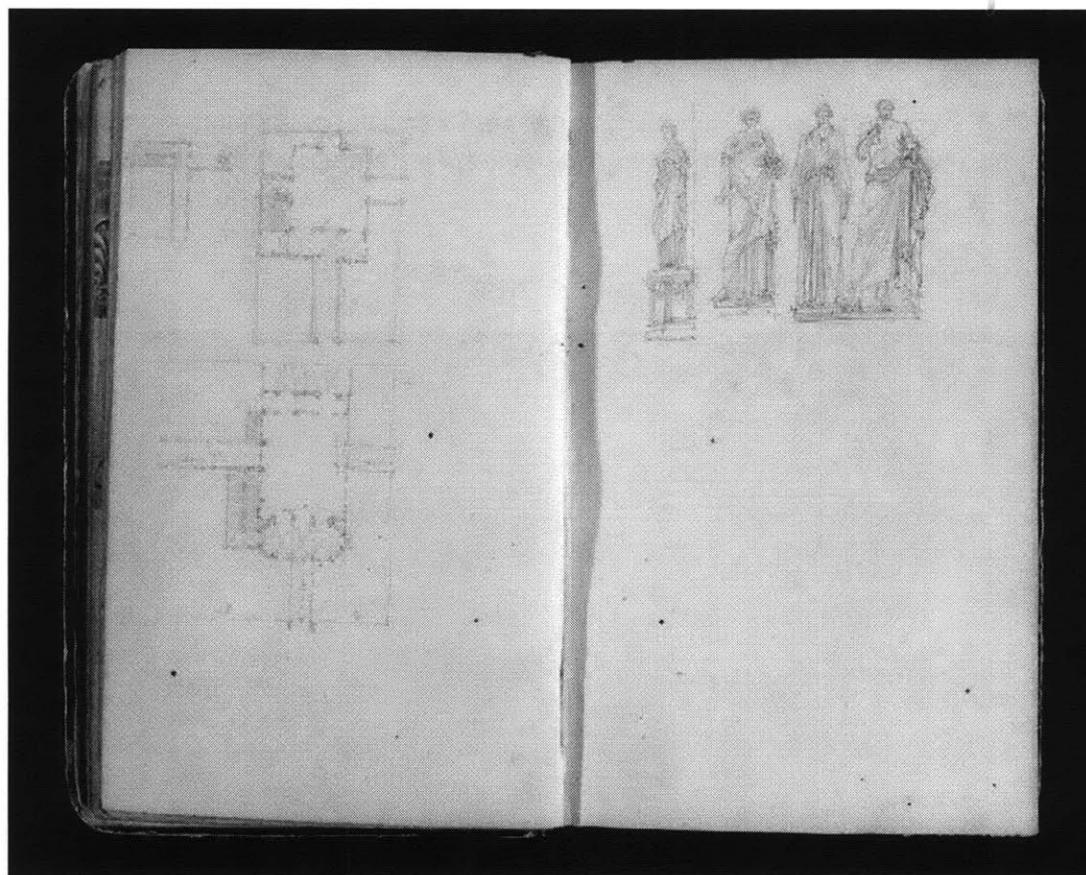
1.18 Charles Percier (attributed), *A sketchbook dated to around 1790* (detail of Vatican monuments), ID 950016, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
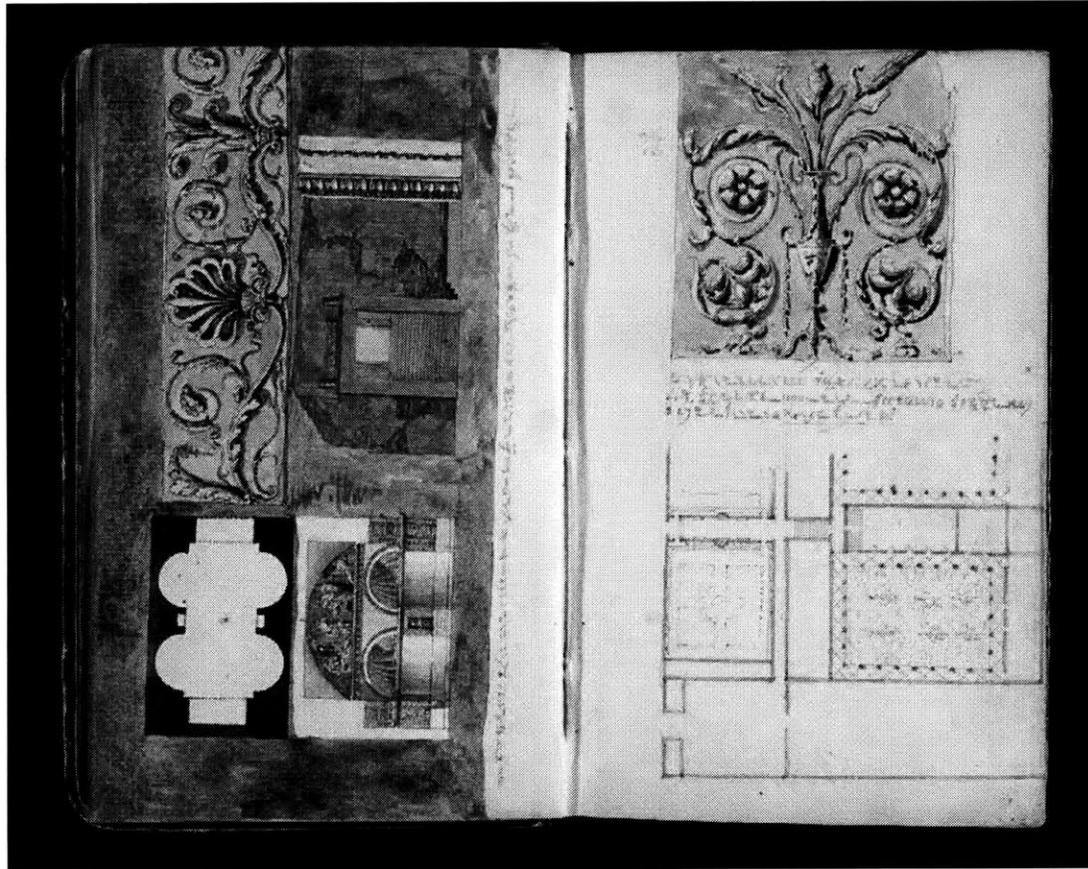
1.19 Charles Percier (attributed), *A sketchbook dated to around 1790* (detail of tomb), ID 950016, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
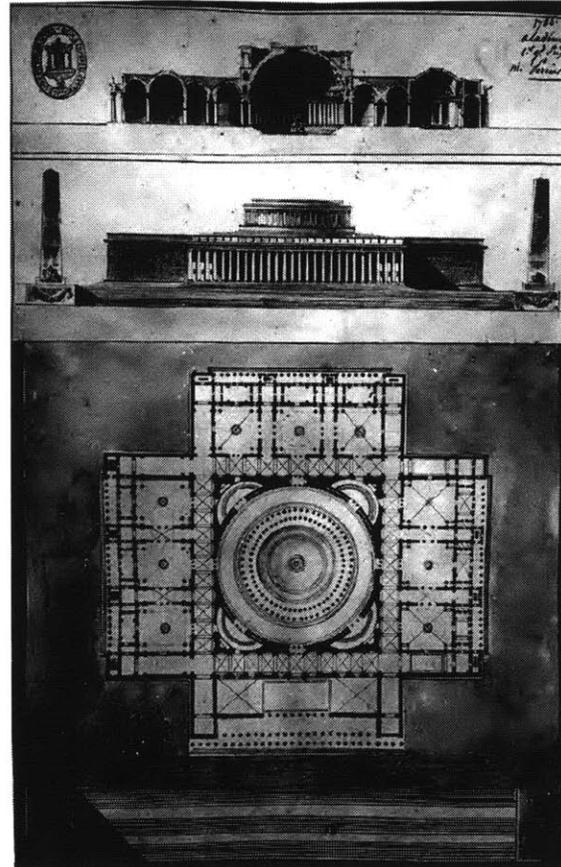
1.20 Charles Percier, Building destined to join the academies, 1786, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.

1.21 Marie-Joseph Peyre, Project for a building to join the academies in *Oeuvres d'architecture,* 1765.
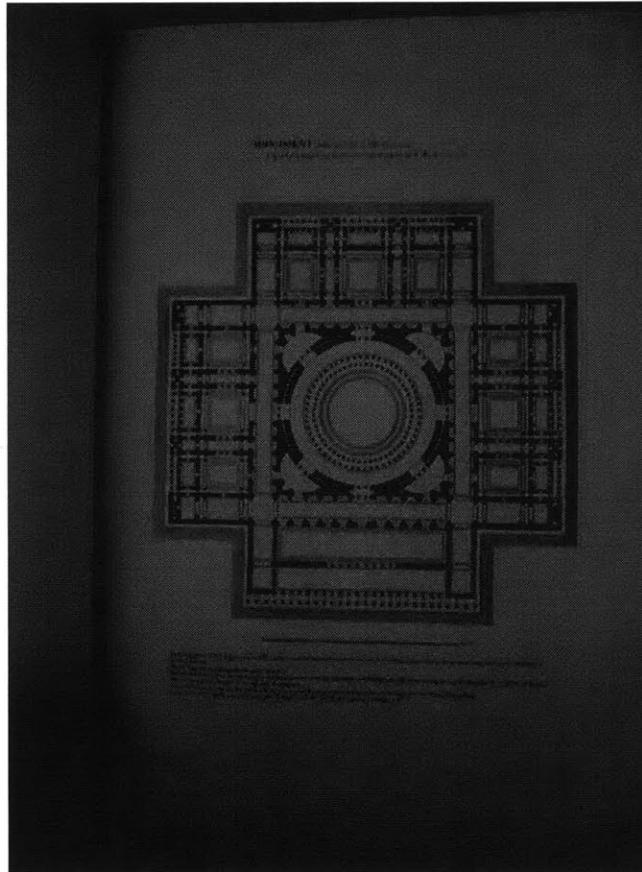
1.22 Armand Parfait Prieur and Pierre-Louis Van Cléemputte. *Collection des prix que la ci-devant Académie d'architecture proposoit et couronnoit tous les ans* (detail of Percier's design for the academies), 1791, ID 84-B13545, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

1.23 Charles Percier, Trajan's column (detail of the base), 1788-9, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
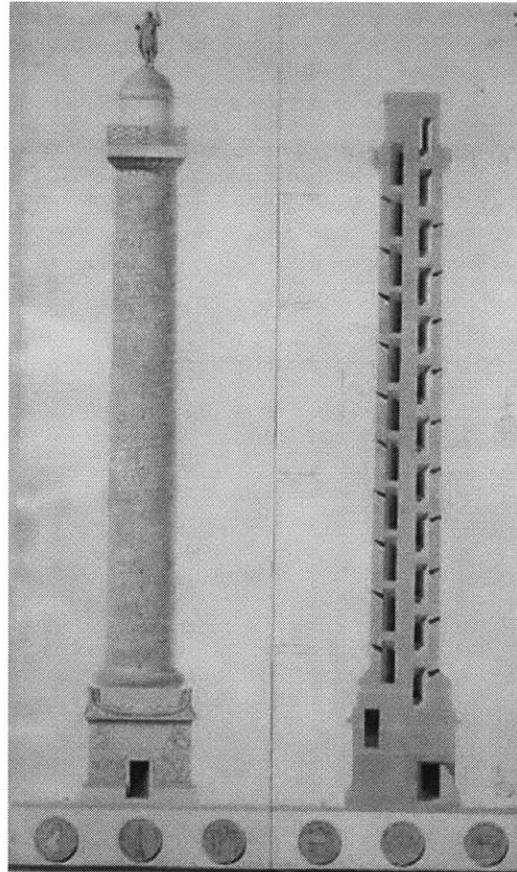
1.24 Percier, Trajan's column, (detail of shaft), 1788-9, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
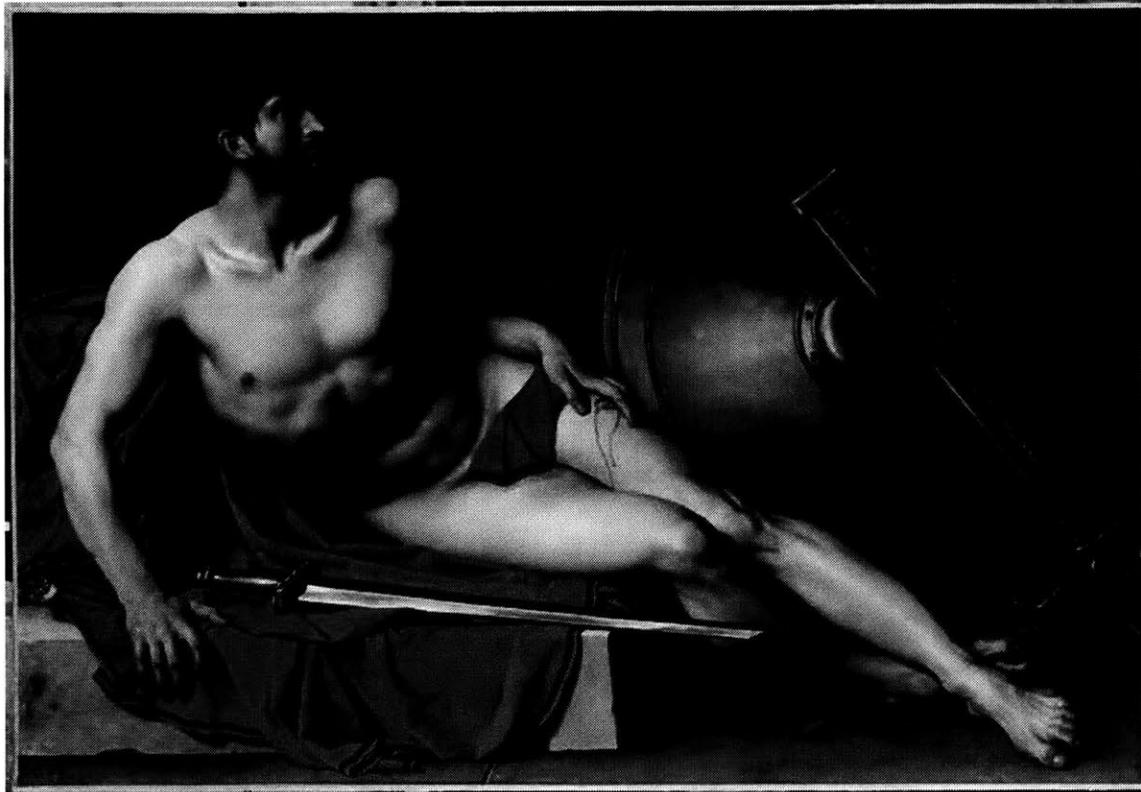
1.25 Jean-Germain Drouais, *Dying Athlete,* 1785, musée du Louvre.

1.26 Drouais' tomb, 1788, Santa Maria in Via Lata, Rome, Italy.
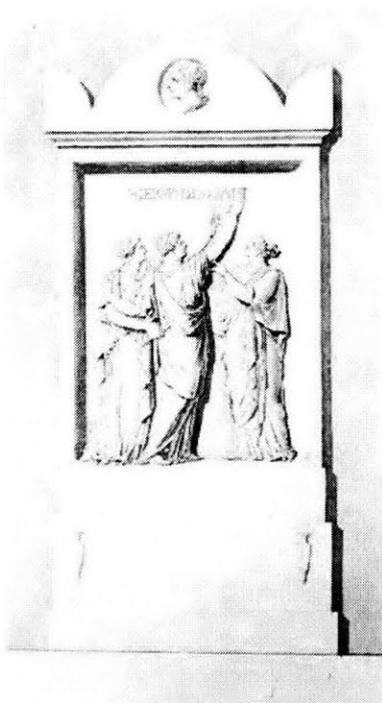
1.27 Charles Percier, Drawing for Drouais' tomb, ca. 1788, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France.
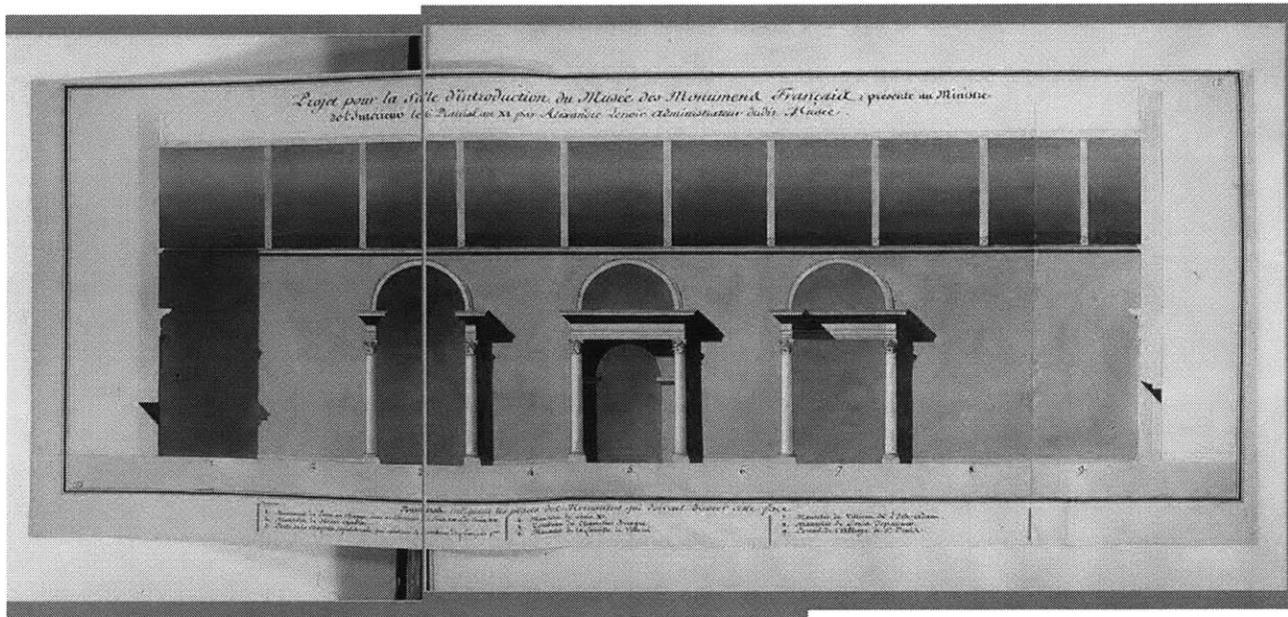
1.28 Alexandre Lenoir and Charles Percier, "Album Lenoir," RF 5279.9 Recto, Département des arts graphiques, musée du Louvre, Paris, France.
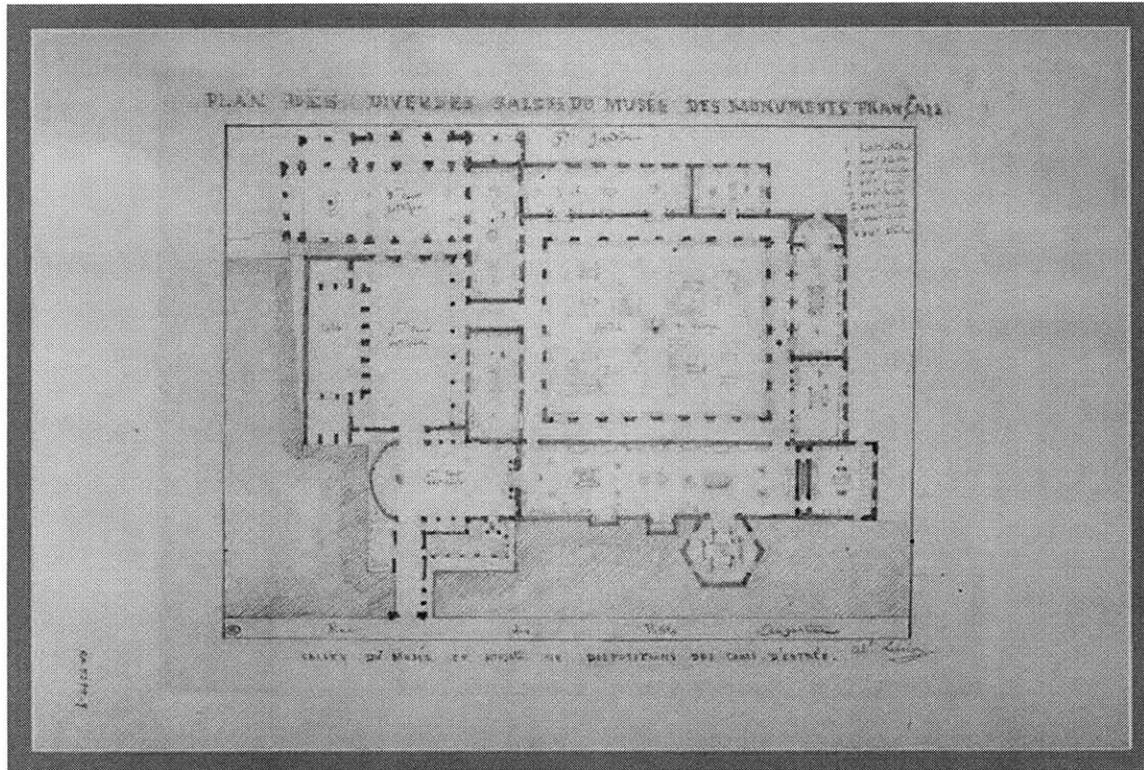
1.29 Alexandre Lenoir (attributed), "Album Lenoir," historically different room of the musee, "Album Lenoir," Département des arts graphiques, musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

1.30 Charles Percier, sketches of Fontainebleau, Album Ms 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France, published in Jeanne Duportal, *Charles Percier (1764-1838), Reproductions de dessins*,
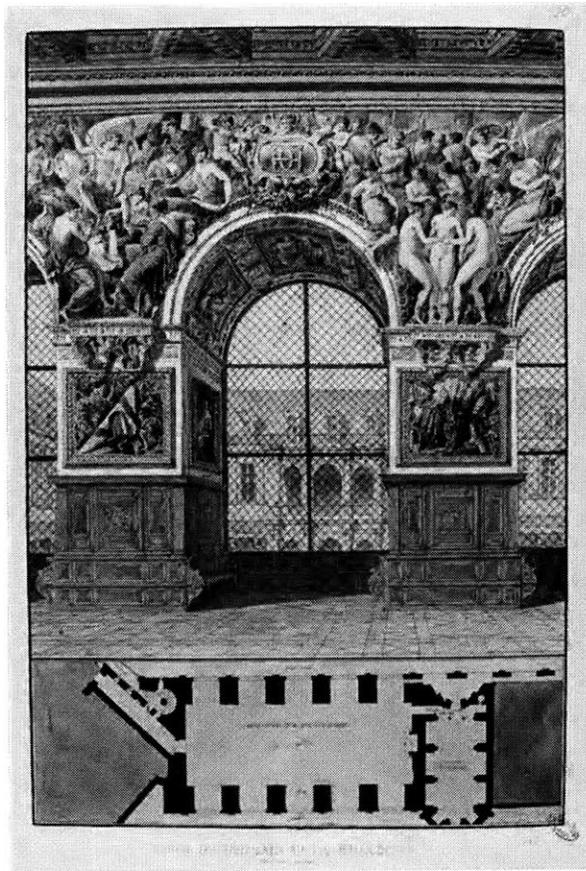
1.31 Charles Percier, sketches of Fontainebleau (detail of the Salle de bal), Album Ms 1014, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, France.

2.1 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, Plate 60, 1801-12.

2.2 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
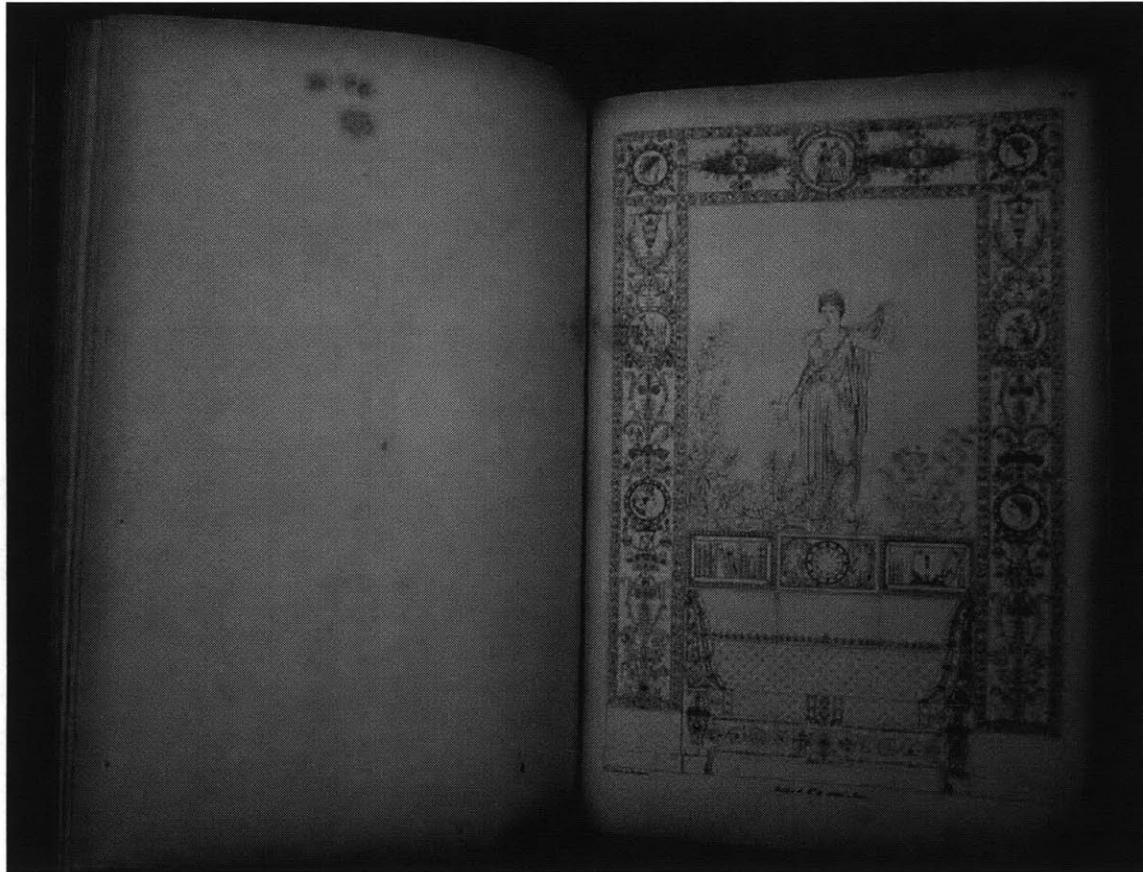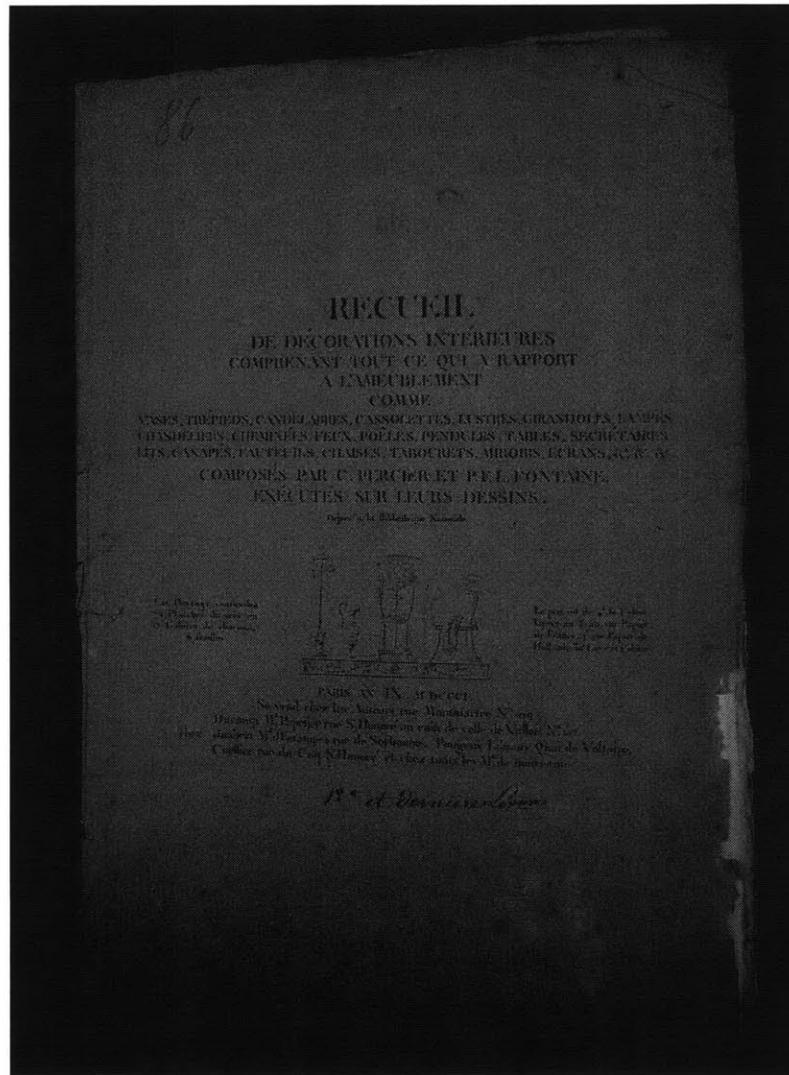
2.3 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures* (detail of blue paper wrapper), ID 83-B 3068-2, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
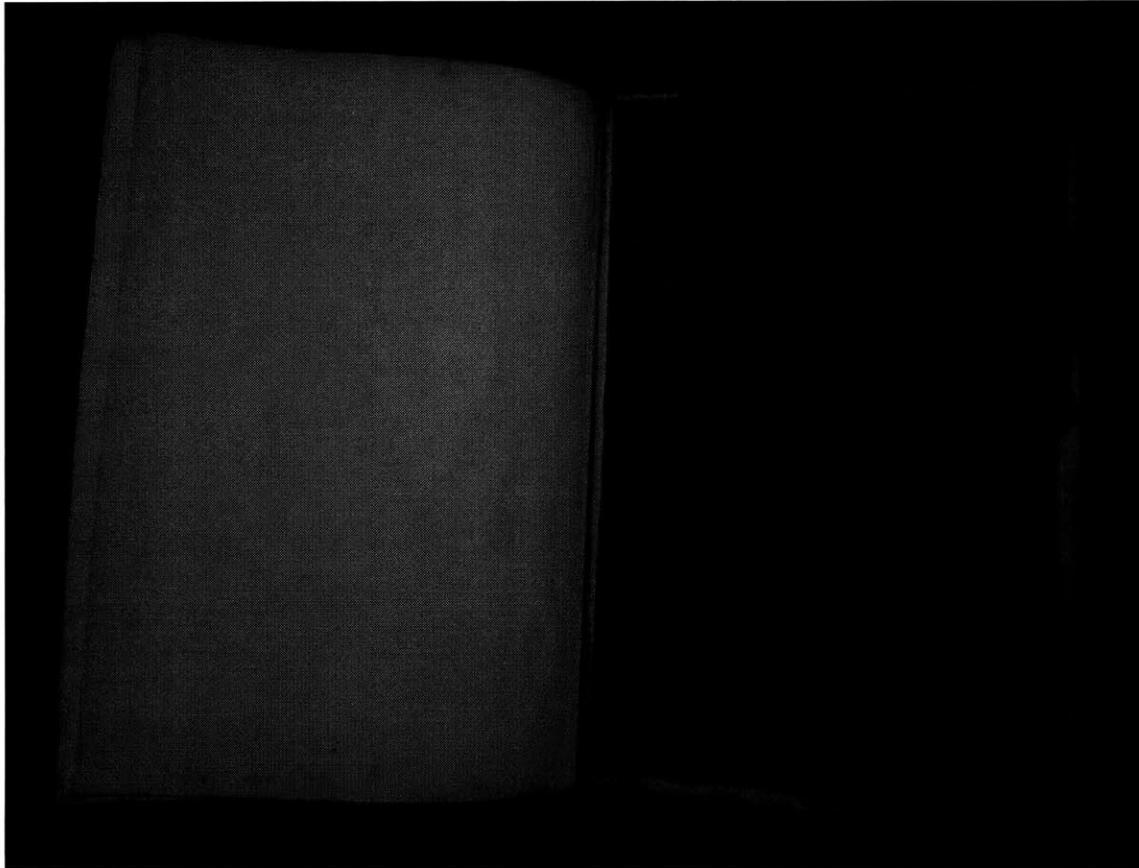
2.4 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures* (original titlepage), ID 83-B 3068-1, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
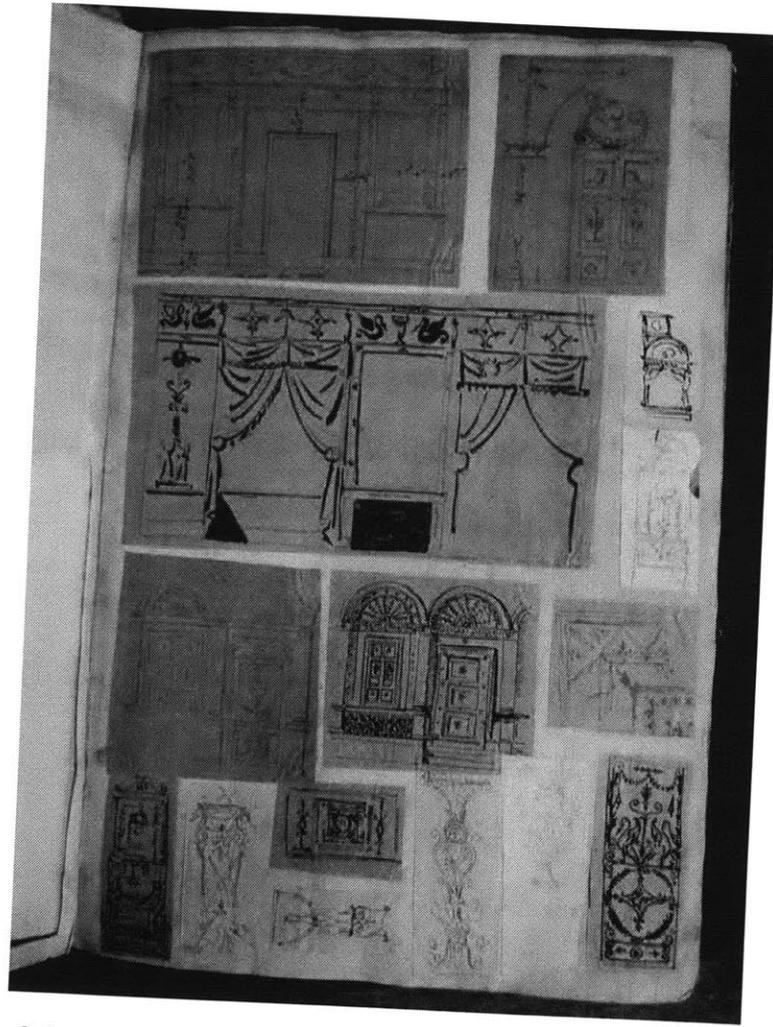
2.5 Scrapbook of sketches, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, 1963, Accession Number 63.535, Drawings and Prints Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.
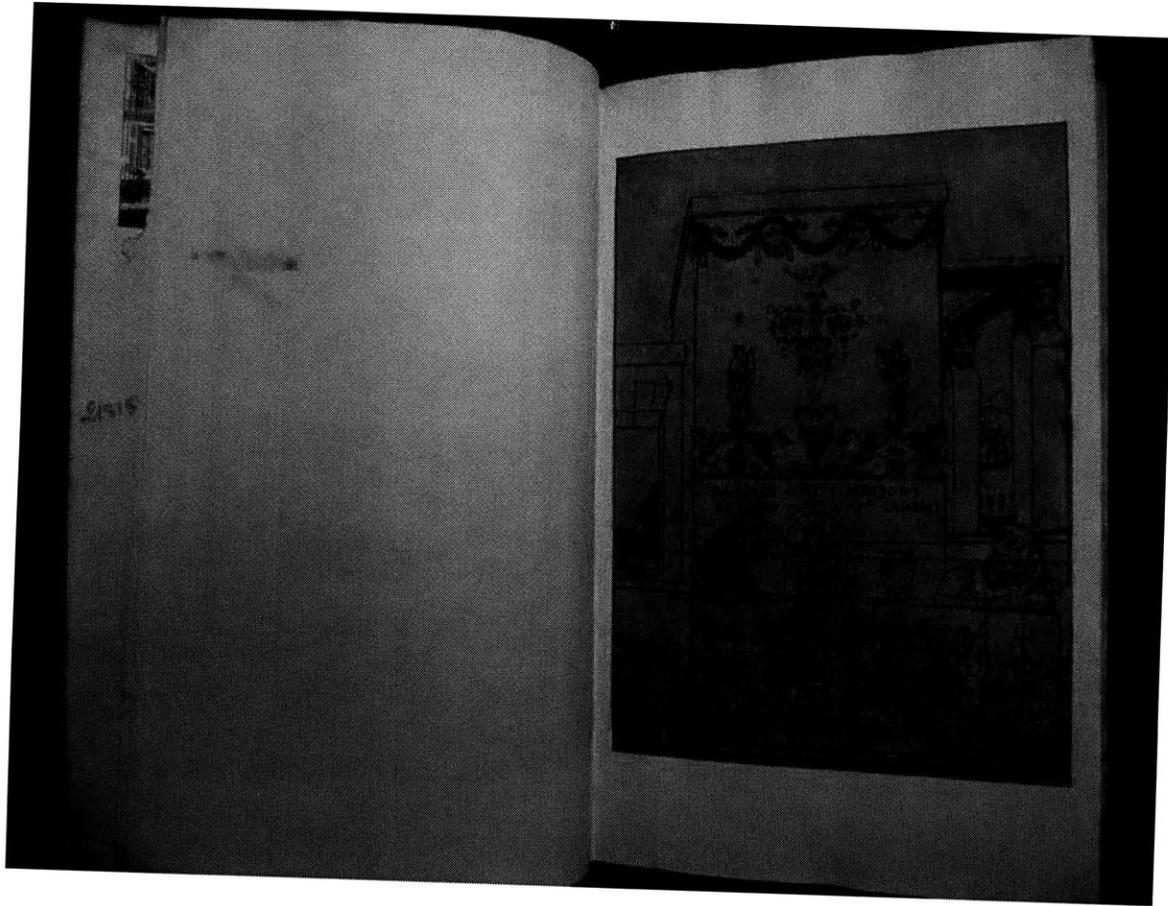
2.6 Atelier de Percier, Album of 63 drawings (detail), OP 7, Accession Number 2000.2, Percier and Fontaine Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.
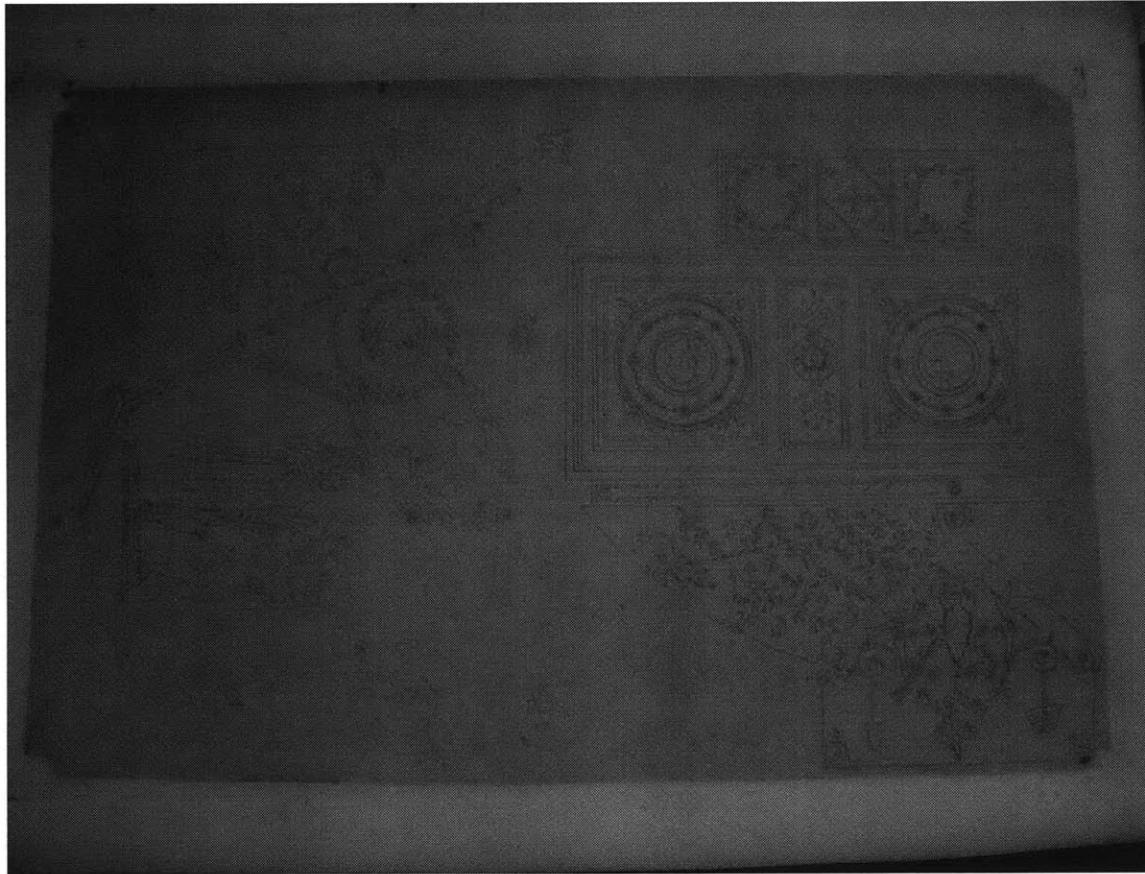
2.7 Jules-Frederic Bouchet, Album (detail of copy of ceiling of Malmaison), ID Number 2598-142, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Ca.

2.8 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures* (detail of stamped notice inside blue paper wrapper), ID 83-B 3068-1, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
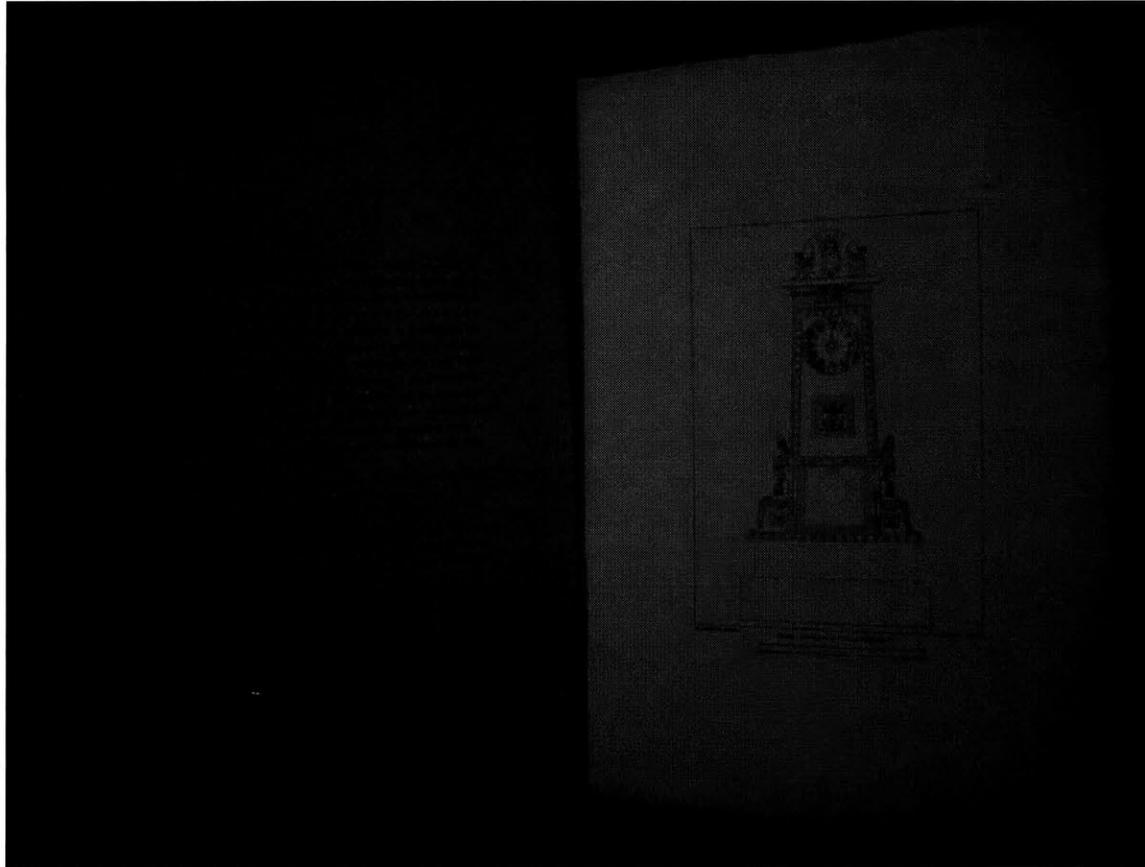
2.9 Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, and Giuseppe Borsato, *Raccolta di decorazi interne*, 1843, ID 84-B8078, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA
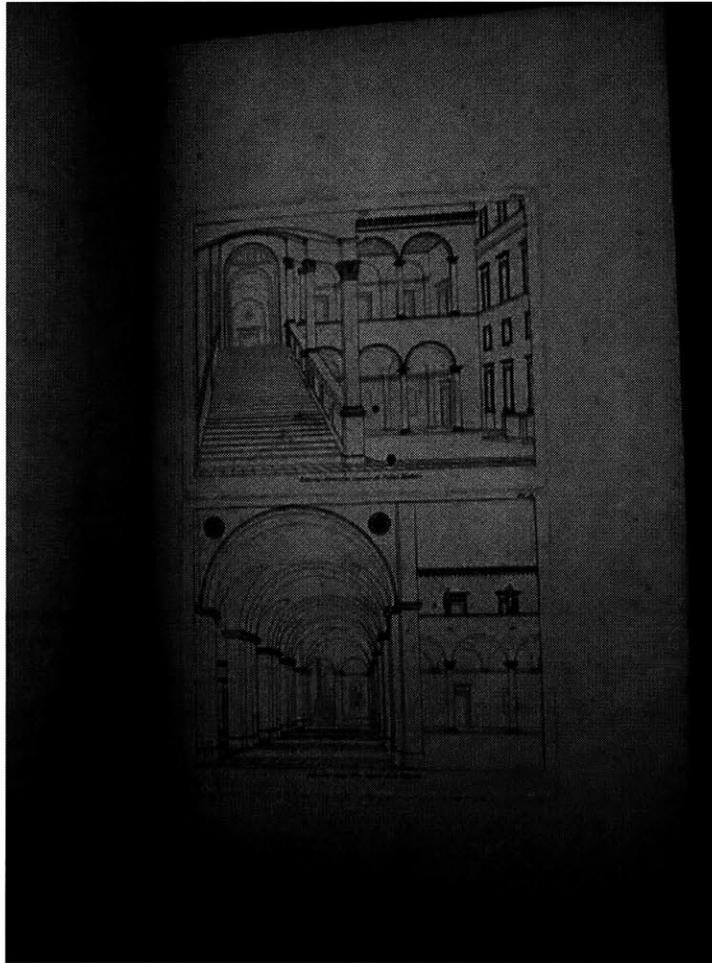
2.10 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Palais, maisons, et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome* (detail of perspectival view), 1798, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute.
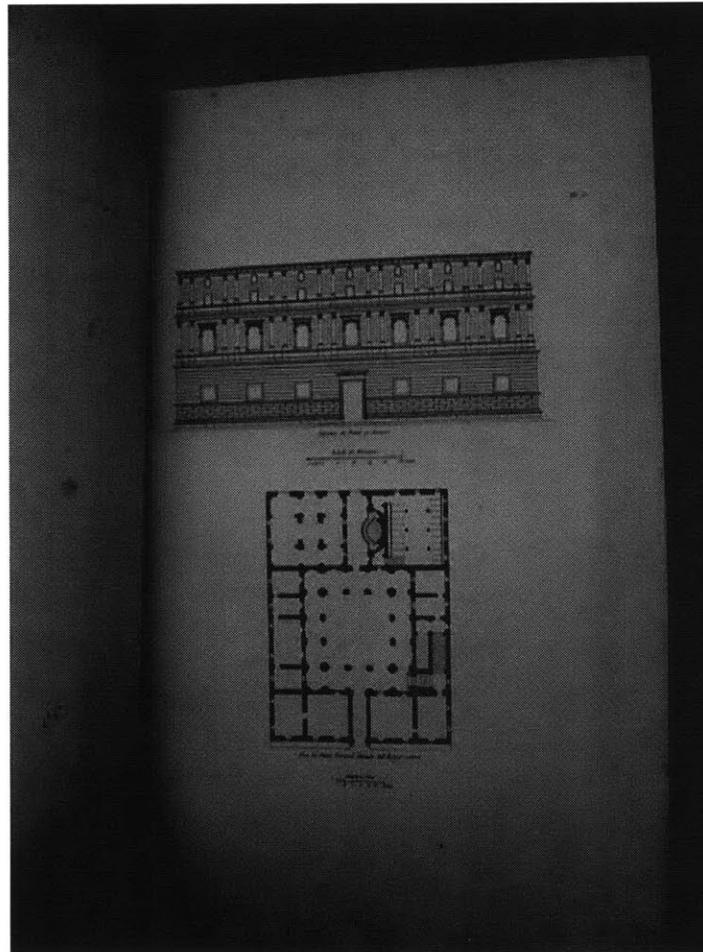
2.11 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Palais, maisons, et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome* (detail of plan), 1798, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute.
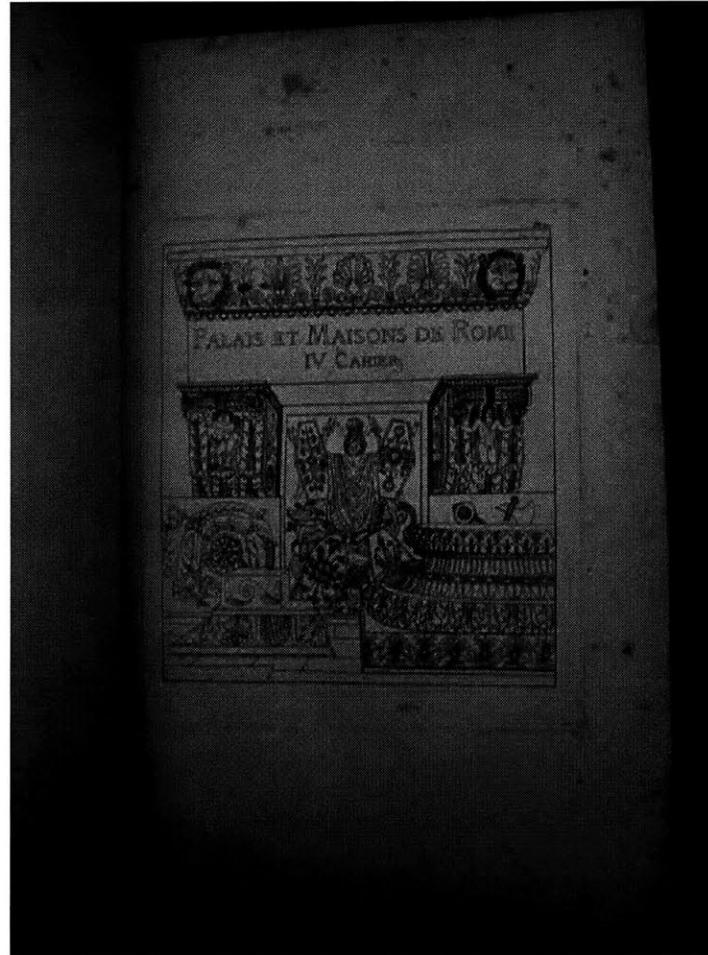
2.12 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Palais, maisons, et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome* (detail of decorative vignette), 1798.

QUINTI

HORATII FLACCI

CARMINUM

LIBER SECUNDUS.

2.13 Horace, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Pierre Didot (detail of vignette by Percier on second book),1799.
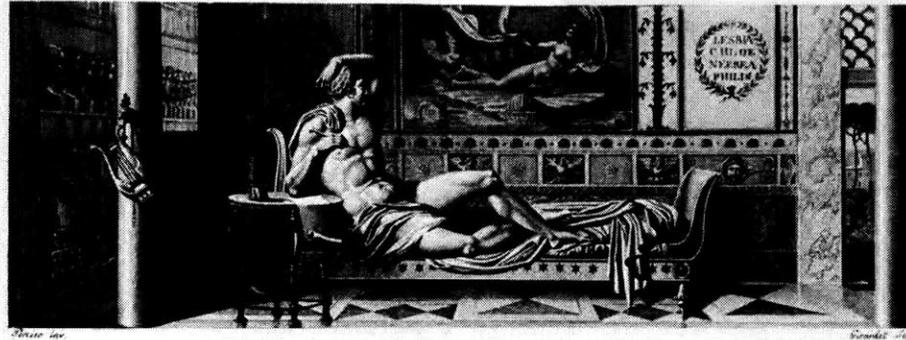
QUINTI

HORATII FLACCI

CARMINUM

LIBER QUARTUS.

2.14 Horace, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Pierre Didot (detail of vignette by Percier on fourth book),1799.

2.15 Charles Percier, Decorative drawing, RF 30632, 1809, Départment des arts graphiques, musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

LIVRE D'ORNEMENS
Inventés & Dessinés
PAR J.O. MEISSONNIER
ARCHITECTE, DESSINATEUR
de la Chambre & Cabinet
DU ROI.

A Paris chez la v.ᵉChereau ruë S.ᵗJacques aux deux pilliers d'or avec privilege du Roi.

2.16 Juste Aurèle Meissonnier, *Oeuvre de Juste Aurele Meissonnier, peintre, sculpteur, architecte &c., dessinateur de la chambre et cabinet du Roy,* 1738-48.

2.17 Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generale d'architettura sopra le cinque maniere degli edifici*, 1537.

2.18 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare I cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi*, 1769, Houghton Rare Books Library, Harvard University.

2.19 Germain Boffrand, Hôtel de Soubise, from *Livre d'architecture*, 1745.

2.20 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Project for a monument to France's heroes*, 1794, D3681, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France.

2.21 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Project for a monument to France's heroes* (section), D3681, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France.

2.22 Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of the Horatii,* 1784

2.23 Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Dead Sons*, 1789

2.24 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Theater to Celebrate the Triumphs of the Republic through Public Song*, 1794, Accession Number D8219, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France.

2.25 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Theater to Celebrate the Triumphs of the Republic through Public Song* (detail), 1794.

Coupe du Théâtre sur la Largeur

2.26 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Theater to Celebrate the Triumphs of the Republic through Public Song* (detail), 1794.

2.27 Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, Album of drawings (Fol. LIII.4), in Daniela Di Castro, *Disegni dall'antico di Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, 1762-1855.*

2.28 Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, Album of drawings (Fol. LVIII), in *Disegni dall'antico di Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, 1762-1855.*

2.29 Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Leeonard Fontaine, and Jean-Thomas Thibault, Stage designs for *Elisca, ou l'amour maternel* (1799), Bibliothèque nationale de France

Journée du 1 Prairial de l'an III
Ferraud, Représentant du Peuple assassiné dans la Convention Nationale

2.30 Jean Duplessis-Berthaux, Ferraud, *Représentant du peuple assassiné dans la Convention Nationale* (showing image of the salle de la Convention).
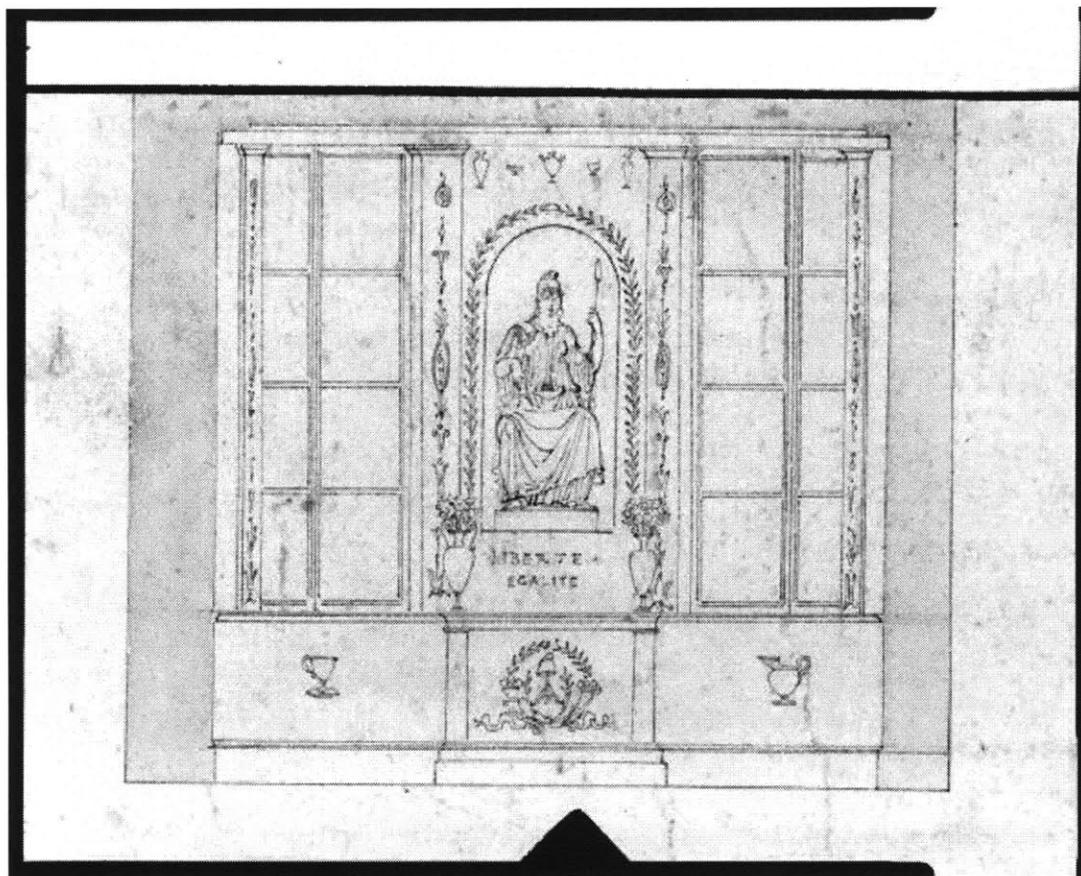
2.31 *Album of twenty-six drawings related to the style of Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine* (detail), 1963.147, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of John Goelet, Cambridge, MA.

2.32 *Album of twenty-six drawings related to the style of Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine* (detail of Chronos lunette).
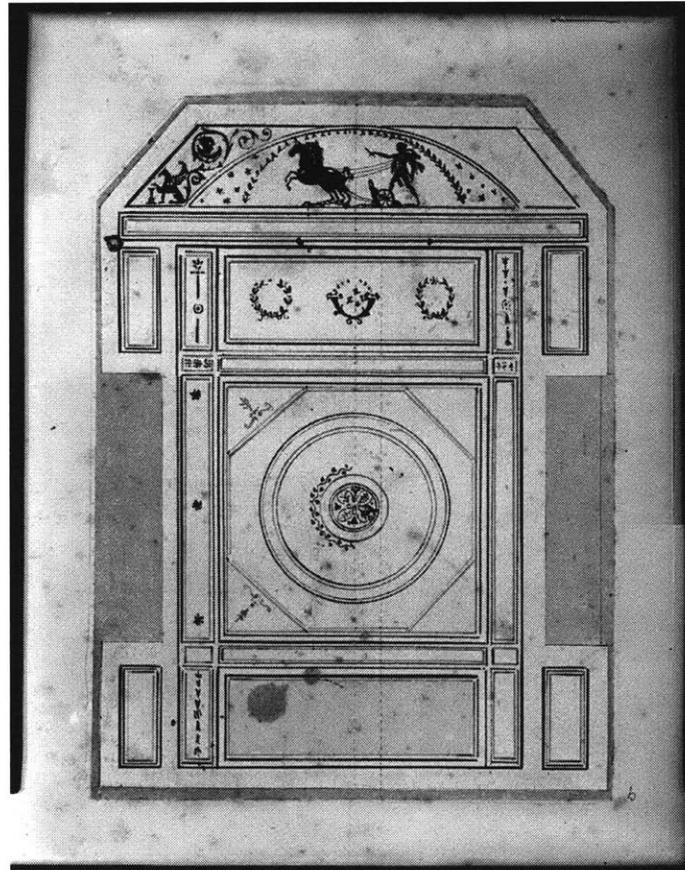
2.33 Album of twenty-six drawings related to the style of Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine (detail of Apollo motif).

2.34 Louis-Léopold Boilly, *Atelier d'Isabey*, 1799.

2.35 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 1.

2.36 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 3.

2.37 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 5.

2.38 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 7.

2.39 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 9.

2.40 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 10.

2.41 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 11.

2.42 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 13.

2.43 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 14.

2.44 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 25.

2.45 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 31.

2.46 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 30.

2.47 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 37.

2.48 Jacob Desmalter (attrib.), Psyché mirror, 1810-14, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

2.49 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 22.

81. Man in front of a psyché mirror, fashion plate in
Journal des dames et des modes, *Year IX (1800–1801).*

2.50 Man in Front of Psyché Mirror, in Pierre de la Mésangère, *Journal des dames et des modes*, Year XI (1800-1).

2.51 Joseph Beunat, plate 90, *Recueil des dessins d'ornements d'architecture, c. 1813*.

2.52 Gilles Cauvet, *Recueil d'ornements*(detail), 1777.

Pl.25

2.53 William Hamilton, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions Upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton; with Engraved Borders,* 1804.

Sausicaa ayant rencontré Ulysse sur le bord du fleuve, elle le mène dans le palais du roi Alcinous son père.

2.54 John Flaxman, *Compositions of John Flaxman ... Being Designs in Illustration of the Odyssey of Homer.*

2.55 Thomas Hope, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, 1807.

2.56 Charles Percier, preparatory drawing for plate 61 of the *Recueil de décorations intérieures,* RF 1711. TER, musée du Louvre.

2.57 Étienne Joubert, Prospectus for *Fragmens d'architecture, sculpture et peinture dans le style antique*, n.d.

2.58 Charles-Pierre-Joseph Normand, *Nouveau recueil en divers genres d'ornemens*, 1803.

2.59 Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École Polytechnique*, 1809-21.

2.60 Robert and James Adam, Section of the Great House at Syon House, 1761, in Robin Evans, "The Developed Surface."
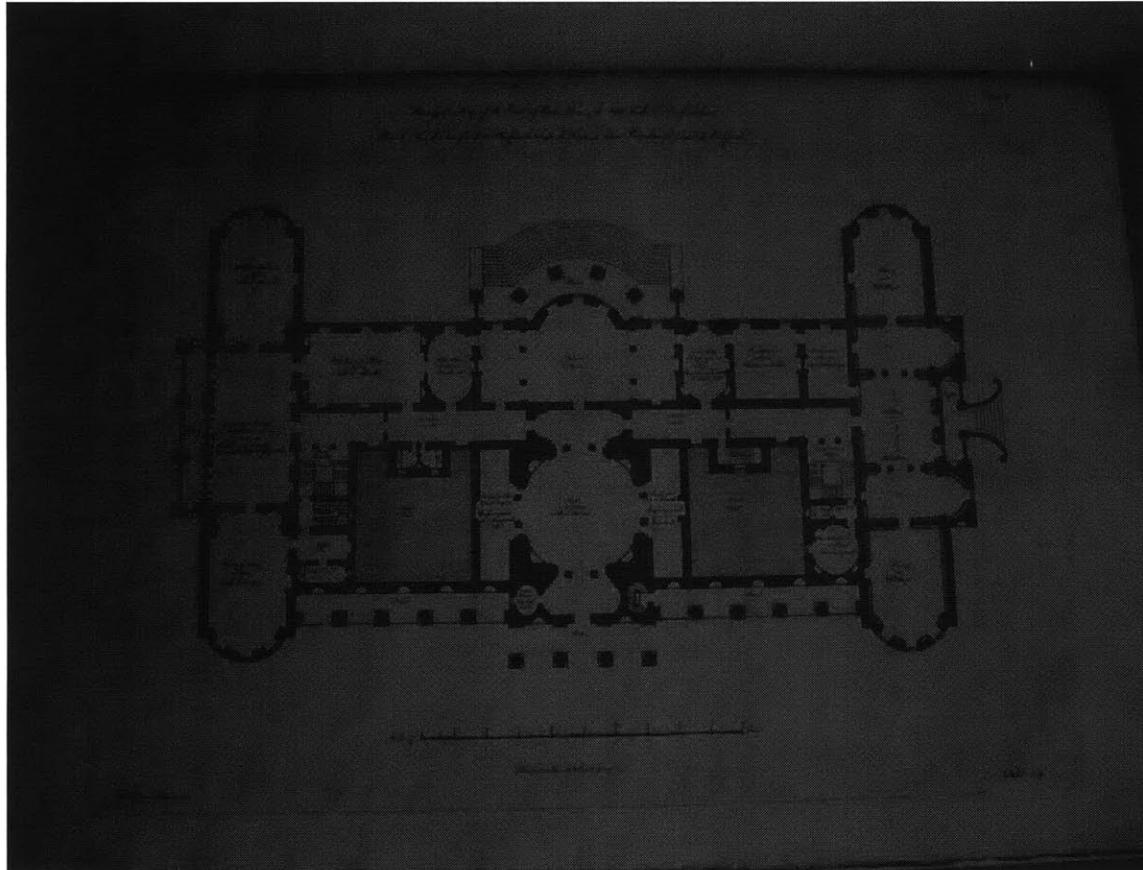
2.61 Robert and James Adam, *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (detail), 1778, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute.
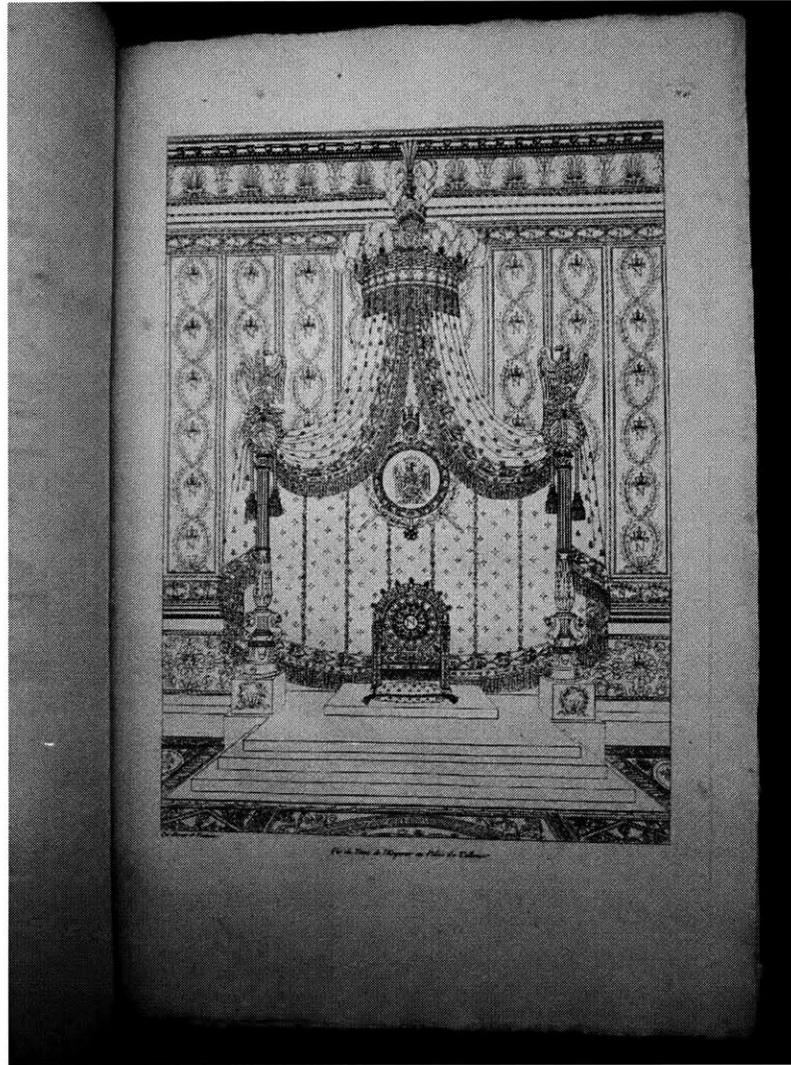
2.62 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 48.

2.63 Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and Jean-Baptiste Isabey, *Le Sacre de S. M. l'Empereur Napoléon* (detail),1822.

2.64 Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and Jean-Baptiste Isabey, *Le Sacre de S. M. l'Empereur Napoléon* (detail of Josephine),1822.

2.65 Percier, Fontaine and Isabey, trial proofs for *Le Sacre*, Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
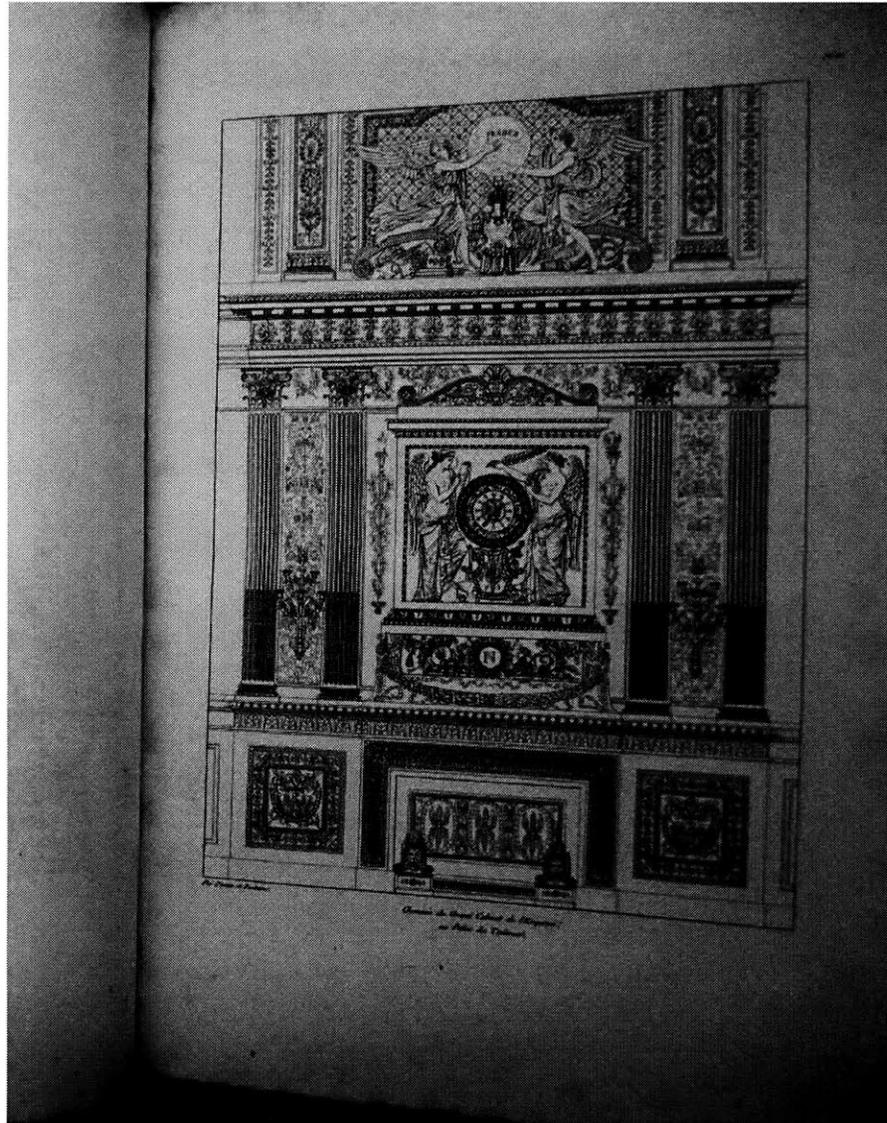
2.66 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 66.

2.67 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 67.
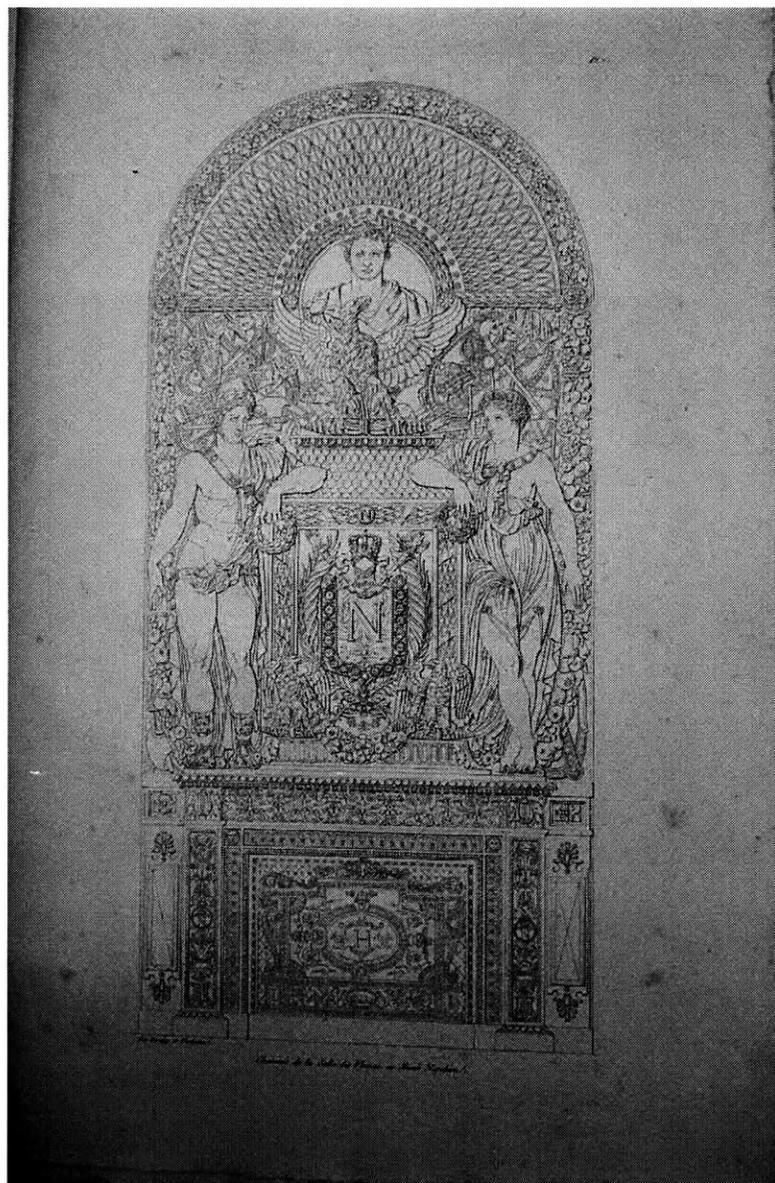
2.68 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 72.

Vue du Palais du Roi de Rome. Projet, N.° 5
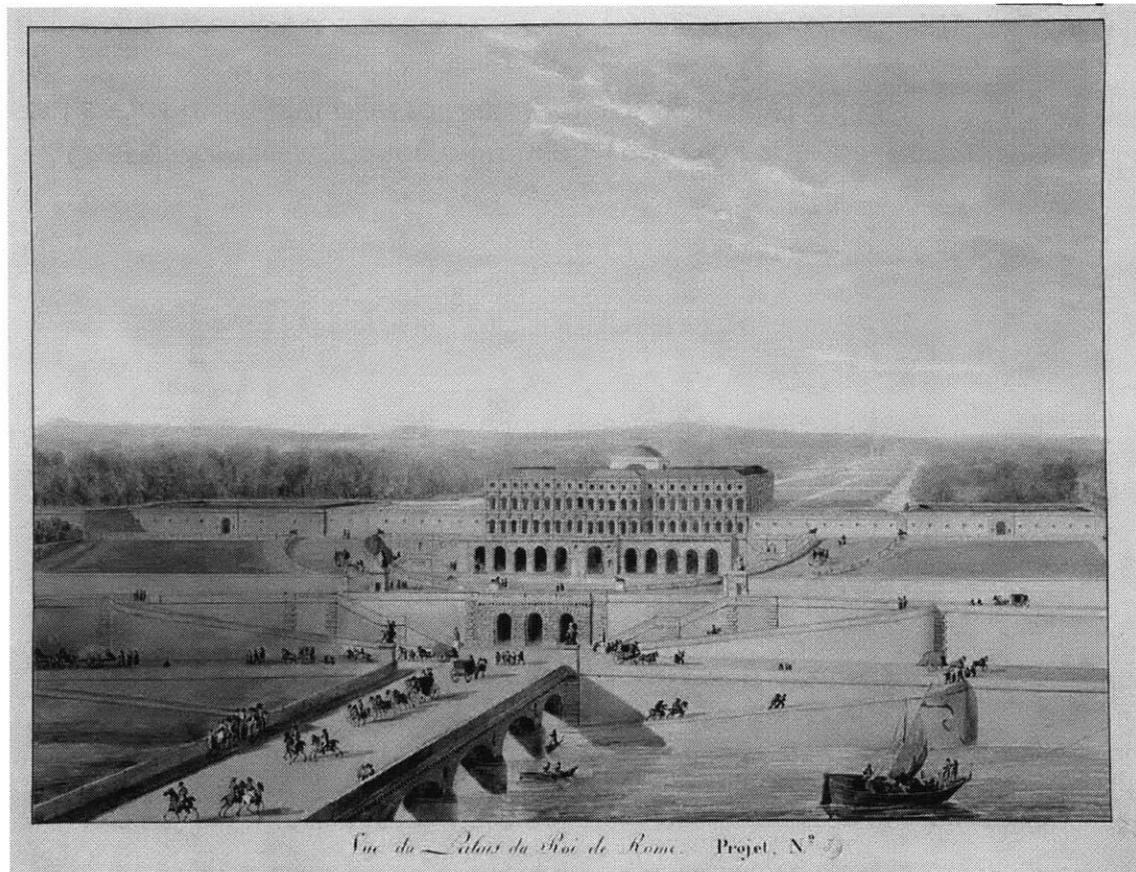
3.1 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, perspectival view of Palais du roi de Rome, Bibliothèque, École des beaux-arts, Paris, France.
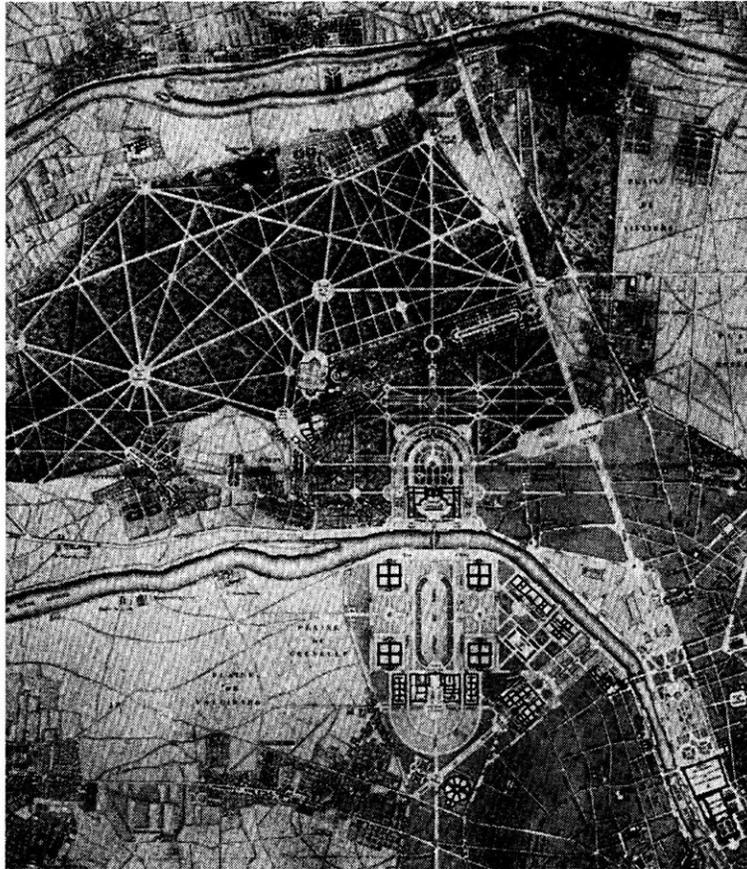
3.2 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains* (map and plan for Palais du roi de Rome), 1833.
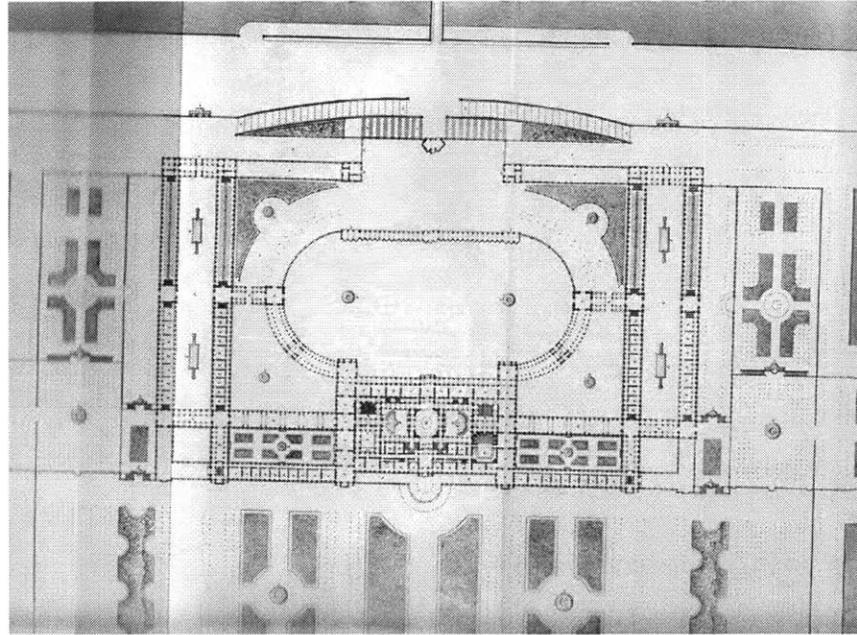
3.3 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains* (detail of first plan for Palais du roi de Rome), 1833.
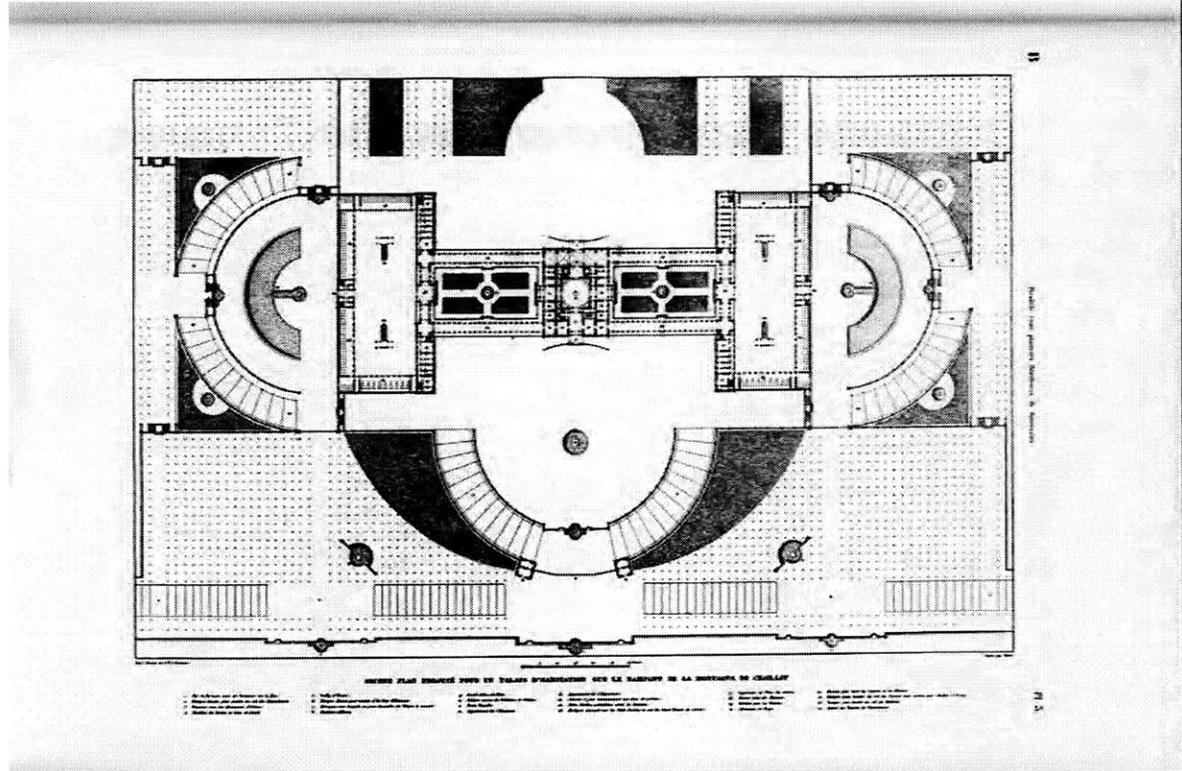
3.4 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, second plan for Palais du roi de Rome, Bibliothèque, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France.

3.5 Château de Versailles.

3.6 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains*, plan of Versailles.

3.7 Glass bottle with effigy of Napoleon.
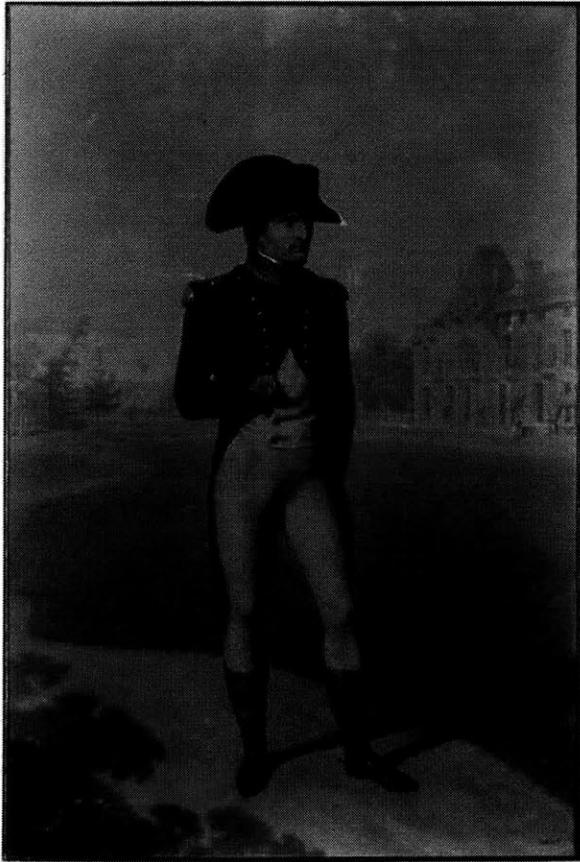
3.8 Jean-Baptiste Isabey, Bonaparte, First Consul at Malmaison, early nineteenth century, Chateau de Malmaison, Musée du château de Malmaison.

3.9 of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon on his Throne,* 1806, Musée de l'armée, Paris, France.

3.10 View of Malmaison.

3.11 Antoine Béranger, Vase depicting the Entry into Paris of Artworks Destined for the Musée Napoléon (detail), 1813, Sèvres.

3.12 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Résidences de souverains*, plan of Malmaison.

Plan du Rez de Chaussée

3.13 Jacques-François Blondel, *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance* (plan of first project), 1737-8, from http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/blondel1737/0054

3.14 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *Perspectival View of the Saltworks of Chaux*, 1775-8.

3.15 Jean Krafft and Nicolas Ransonnette, *Plans, coupes, élévations des plus belles maisons et des hôtels construits à Paris et dans les environs*, 1801.

3.16 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome*, 1798.

VILLA PIA.

VUE DE LA COUR ET DE LA FAÇADE INTÉRIEURE DU CASIN DE LA VILLA PIA.

3.17 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Choix des plus célèbres maisons de plaisance de Rome et de ses environs* (detail of Pirro Ligorio's Casa Pia), ca. 1809.

3.18 Louis-Ambroise Dubut, *Architecture civile*, 1803.

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3.19 Jean-Nicolas Louis Durand, *Précis,* (detail of Maison de campagne).

3.20 Charles Percier, *Section of Queen's Dairy at Rambouillet*, c. 1805, Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

3.21 Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of Marengo*, 1801

3.22 Percier and Fontaine, design for a theater at Malmaison, Musée Carnavalet.

3.23 Anne-Louis Girodet, *Ossian Receiving the Ghosts of Dead French Heroes*, 1802.

3.24 François Gérard's, *Ossian Evoking the Phantoms with His Harp on the Banks of the Lora*, 1802.

1.17 Emmanuel Héré, Section of the Tréfle, Lunéville. From his *Recueil des plans, élévations, et coupes tant géometrales qu'en perspective des châteaux, jardins, et dépendances que le Roy de Pologne occupe en Lorraine ...* (Paris, 1750–53), vol. 1, pl. 21. © BnF

3.25 Emanuel Heré, Trèfle pavilion at Lunéville, 1737-8.

3.26 Gioachino Serangeli, *Napoleon receives the Deputies of the Army after his Coronation, December 8, 1804*, 1806, Versailles, Musée nationale du Château.

3.27 Frontispiece to the *Description de l'Egpyte,* 1809-28.

3.28 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 8.

3.29 Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la basse et haute d'Égypte suivant la campagne de Bonaparte*, 1802.

3.30 Charles Percier and Guillaume-Martin Biennais, Drawing for a Coin Cabinet,
Album Biennais, Musée des arts décoratifs (left) and François-Honoré-Georges Jacob-
Desmalter, Martin-Guillaume Biennais, Medal Cabinet, 1809-19, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York, NY.

3.31 Denon, *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Égypte* (pylon at Ghoos).

3.32 Album of twenty-six drawings related to the style of Charles Percier and
Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine (detail of Egyptian decor), 1963.147,
Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of John Goelet, Cambridge, MA.

3.33 Hôtel Beauharnais, Paris, France.

3.34 Michel Rigo, *Portrait of Cheikh Suleiman El-Fayoumi,* Musée national de Malmaison.

3.35 Entrance to Château de Malmaison.

3.36 Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine (attrib.), *Drawing for the entrance of Malmaison.*

3.37 Louis-Jean Desprez, *Copper Tents*, Haga Park, Stockholm, Sweden.

3.38 Louis-Jean Desprez, *Watercolor Sketch for a Sentry Pavilion*, 1787, Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, Sweden.

3.39 Louis-Jean Desprez, Approved Plans for the Copper Tents, 1788, Archives of the Royal Palace of Stockholm, Sweden.

3.40 François-Joseph Belanger, Bagatelle, facade, 1777.

3.41 François-Joseph Belanger Bagatelle, Section showing the military themed bedroom of the Comte d'Artois, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

3.42 Malmaison, Salle de conseil.

3.43 Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 55.

3.44 Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti, *French Army at the Passage of Niemen on June 23, 1812*, 1812.

3.45 Martin-Guillaume Biennais, Nécessaire of Napoleon, 1806.

3.46 Martin-Guillaume Biennais, Trade Card.

3.47 View of the Twin Kiosks, Topkapi Palace, Istanbul.

3.48 Tent of Napoleon, Mobilier national, from *Age of Napoleon*, 182.

3.49 Percier and Fontaine, designs for the Sacre at Notre Dame Cathedral, private collection, published in Fontaine, *Journal*.

3.50 Percier and Fontaine, designs for the Distribution of the Eagles at the École
Militaire, private collection, published in Fontaine, *Journal*.

74. Zelt für die feierliche Übergabe der Legionsadler, Kat. 365

3.51 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, sketch of Percier and Fontaine's École militaire facade, 1804, in Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Reisen nach Italien : Tagebücher, Briefe, Zeichnungen, Aquarelle* (1994).

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3.52 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Schloss Charlottenhof (detail), 1826-9.
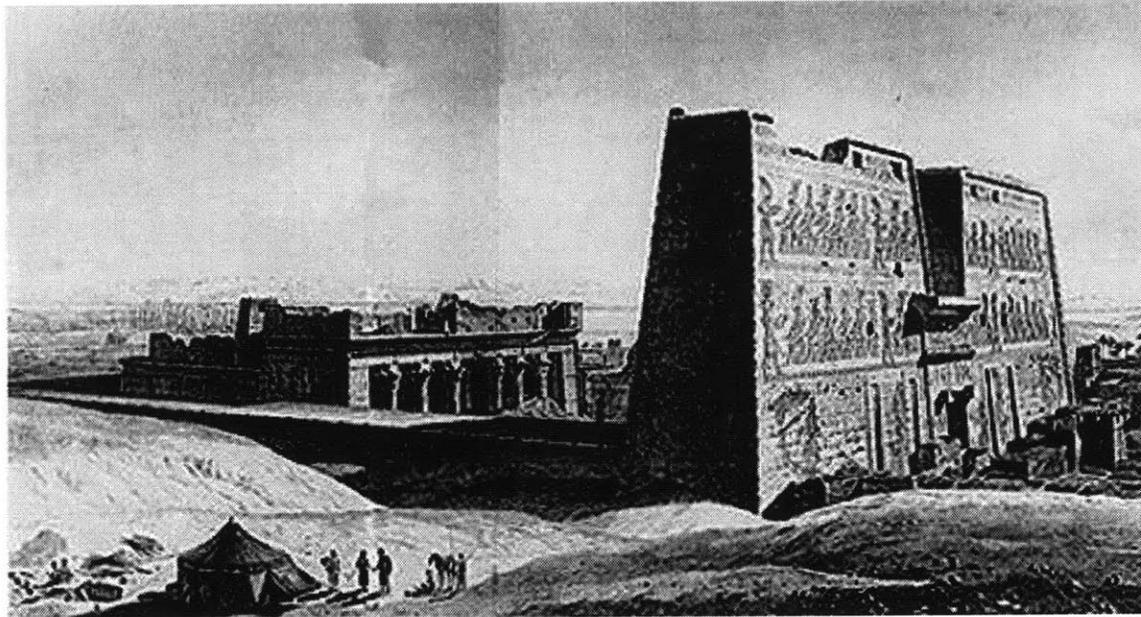
3.53 Edfou, Apollionopolis Magna, Vue du grand temple in *Description de l'Egypte*, 1809-1828, Antiquities 1 plate 49.

3.54 Josephine's bedroom, Malmaison.

3.55 Josephine's bedroom, colored print.

3.56 Schloss Arenenberg, Switzerland (detail of entry vestibule).

4.1 Casa del Labrador, Royal Palace of Aranjuez, Spain.

4.2 Isidro Velázquez, *View of the Casa del Labrador*, 1798.

4.3 Facade, Casa del Labrador (Image from Javier Jordan de Urriés, 70)
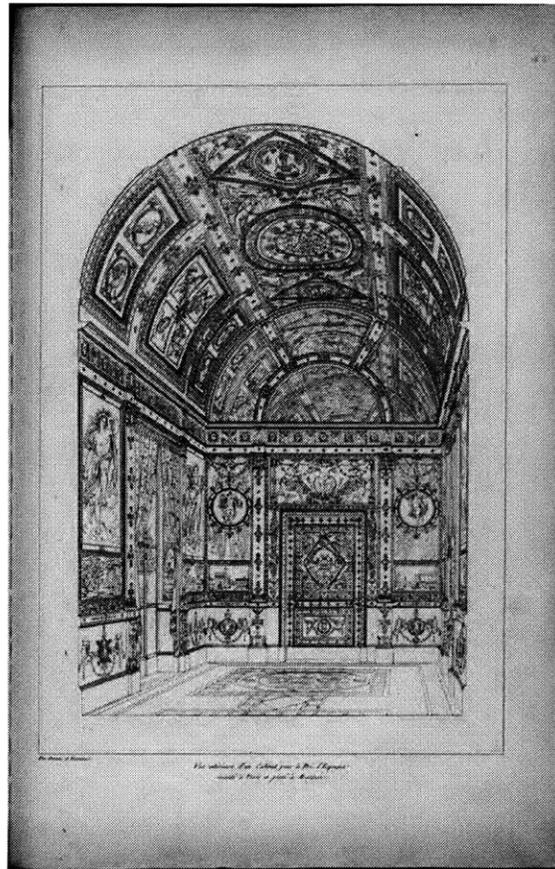
4.4 Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 61.
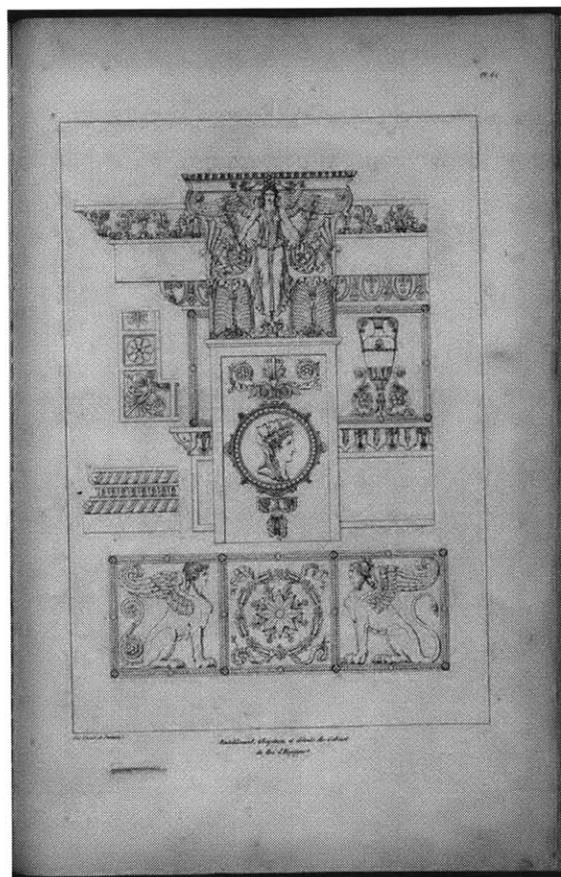
4.5 Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 62.
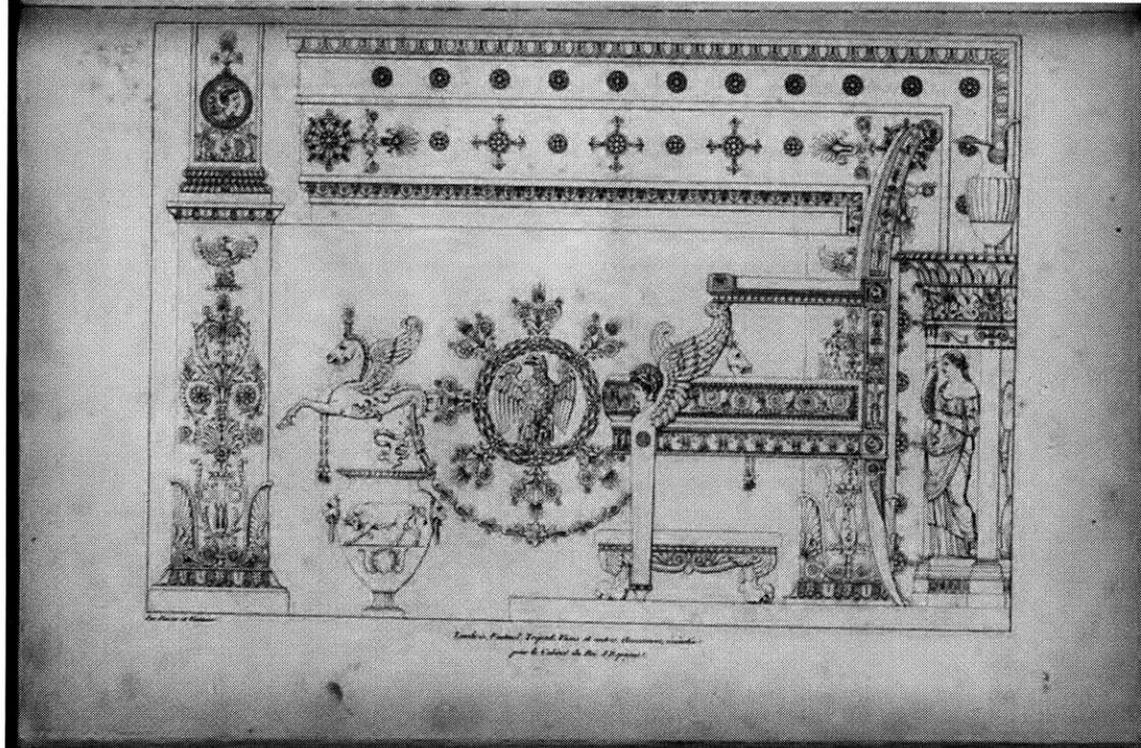
4.6 Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 63.
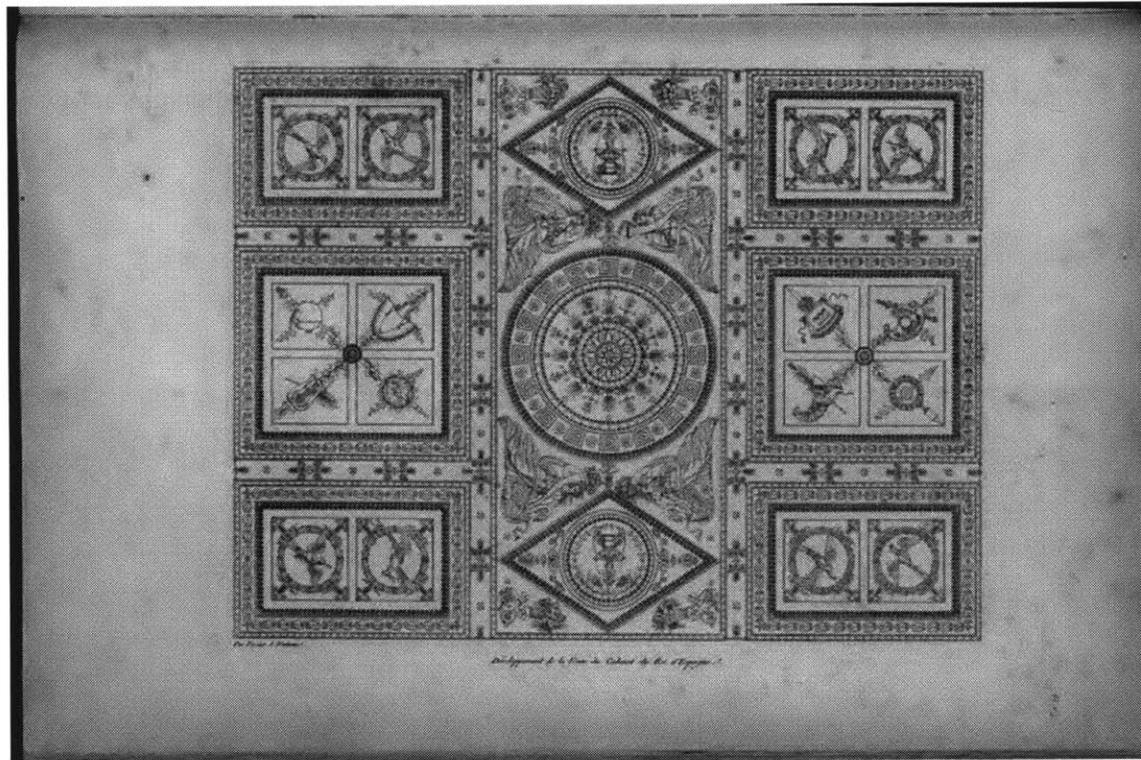
4.7 Percier and Fontaine, *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, plate 64.

4.8 Platinum cabinet (detail of the initials of Charles IV and Maria Louisa Theresa).

4.9 Platinum cabinet door by Jacques Barraband.

4.10 Platinum cabinet, detail of paintings by Girodet, Thibault and Bidault.
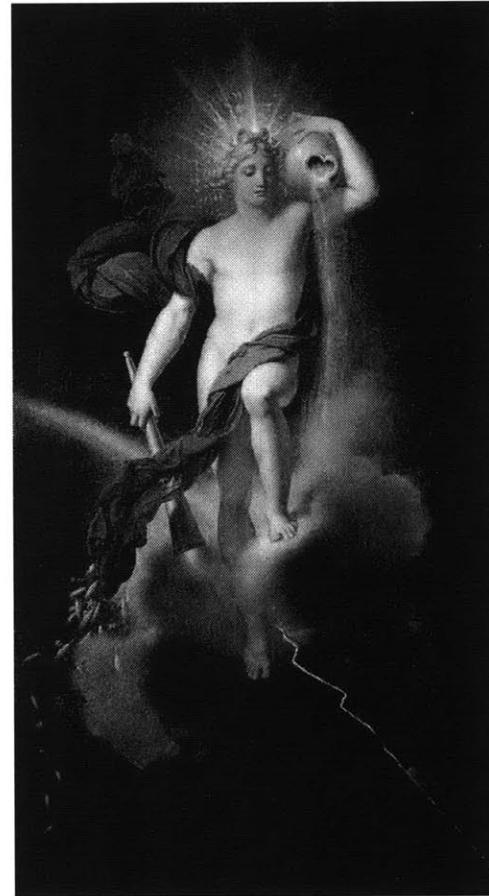
4.11 Girodet, *Spring* and *Summer*, 1800-1801.
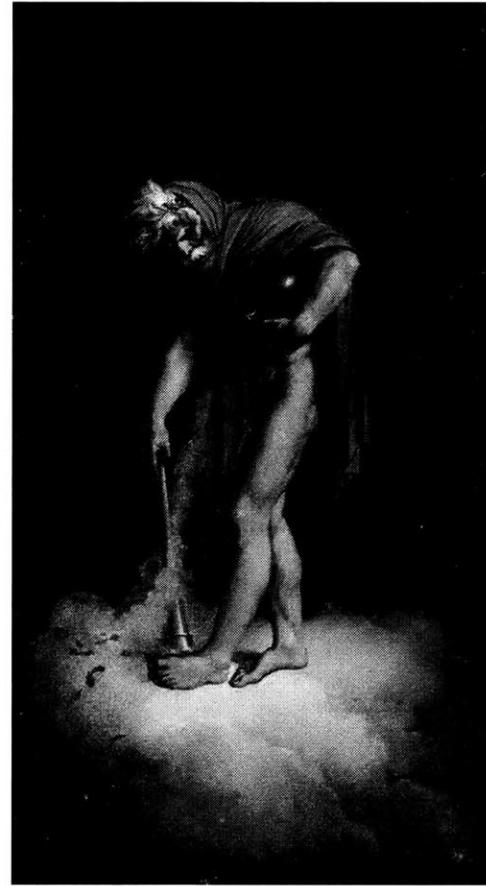
4.12 Girodet, *Fall* and *Winter*, 1800-2.

4.13 Mariano Salvador Maella, *Summer* and *Autumn,* 1805 (installed in the Platinum cabinet).

4.14 Platinum cabinet, detail of platinum ornaments.