Une Architecture Murmurante:
An Expression of Freemasonry in
Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's Propylaea for Paris?

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Abstract

Anthony Vidler's recent monograph on the eighteenth-century French architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806) characterizes certain aspects of Ledoux's work as Masonic. Vidler defines Freemasonry primarily as an instrument of sociability. His recognition of Masonic imagery and intent, especially in Ledoux's Ideal City, combines with certain details of Ledoux's life to convince Vidler of Ledoux's adherence to a Masonic or quasi-Masonic lodge.

The matter remains open to debate. Vidler's view of Freemasonry does not entirely accord with its factious and ambitious condition in eighteenth-century France. Nor does he sufficiently address the public manifestation of Masonic symbolism which, despite the Order's code of secrecy, was divulged to the profane, emerging architecturally as part of Neoclassicism's stylistic revival of the antique. The weakness of Vidler's analysis becomes apparent when he overlooks Masonic symbolism in a project that does not conform to his positive image of the Order: Ledoux's network of customs houses for Paris, the project he called the Propylaea.

Résumé

La monographie de Anthony Vidler sur Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806) souligne dans l'oeuvre de l'architecte français un aspect dit franc-maçonnique. Pour Vidler, la franc-maçonnerie se particularise par son rôle social. Son identification de symboles et de desseins maçonniques, surtout dans l'ultime projet de ville industrielle, suffit à convaincre l'écrivain de l'attachement de Ledoux à une loge maçonnique ou quasi-maçonnique.

Le problème ne se résout pas si facilement. La définition de la franc-maçonnerie des Lumières qu'adopte Vidler ne s'accorde pas parfaitement avec le caractère factieux et ambitieux de l'ordre à cette époque. La vulgarisation de la symbolique maçonnique à travers des divulgations et ses manifestations dans la renaissance néo-classique de l'antique, est un phénomène de la période négligé par Vidler. Cette lacune de son analyse devient particulièrement apparente quand on voit qu'il ignore la symbolique maçonnique dans un projet qui ne se conforme pas à son image utopique de l'ordre: les bureaux de la nouvelle enceinte de Paris, le projet que Ledoux nomma les Propylées.

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It would have been impossible for me to undertake this work without the encouragement of Donigan Cumming who also made splendid photographs of the four remaining Propylaea in Paris.

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Introduction. Sources and Precedents for this Work: The Scope of Previous Research

In the decade just ended, the bicentennial of the French Revolution has stimulated historical research and theoretical reconsideration of the period now known as the inception of Modern art. Scholarly investigation of the achievements and practice of eighteenth-century architecture has been advanced by the publication of Anthony Vidler's monographic treatment of the French Neoclassical architect, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806).[1]

Vidler's is the first comprehensive English-language study of Ledoux; more important, it is the first in any language to pick up the gauntlet thrown down in 1936 by American art historian Meyer Schapiro. In his critique of Emil Kaufmann's comparative treatments of Ledoux and Le Corbusier - two figures then bracketing the sweeping formal, technological and social changes of Modern architecture - Schapiro called for a study that would return the eighteenth-century practitioner to his time For Vidler, some fifty years later, this was the study that was still needed[2] and, while he has found no better system of formal classification than Kaufmann's, he has poured into Ledoux's concatenated forms what Ledoux himself stressed as the context of his work: Art, Manners and Legislation[3] or the aesthetic developments, societal shifts and political upheavals of Ledoux's interesting times.

Until now, these have been subsumed under a variety of approaches taken

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[1]. Anthony Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1990).

[2] Vidler, pp. x-xi. He is referring to Meyer Schapiro, "The New Viennese School," in The Art Bulletin 18, no. 2 (June 1936), pp. 258-66.

[3]. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, L'Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation Vol. I (Paris: L'Imprimerie de H.L. Perroneau, chez l'auteur, rue Neuve d'Orléans, 1804); facsimile, second edition (Noerdlingen, 1987).

by biographers, art historians, archivists and analysts to Ledoux's complex and contradictory oeuvre. As Vidler points out, the Ledoux bibliography is a catalogue of competitive attitudes evinced toward Ledoux during his lifetime and calcified in the literature since his death. Vidler himself cannot help but revisit the Kaufmann canon of Ledoux's precocious Modernism as a recurrent theme of his own scholarly investigation. From the evidence of the work, Vidler speculates on the man, an approach made possible not by Ledoux's remaining buildings but by his writings and engravings in which he exercised greater artistic freedom and full poetic licence, liberated by age and events from the constraints of his practice.

Weaving Ledoux into his times, Vidler explores his subject's friendships and professional associations: from his knowledge of the period, he places Ledoux within the eighteenth-century phenomenon of sociability. Not for the first time in his writings on Ledoux, and not without support from other scholars, Vidler considers the possibility of an influence on Ledoux's work by his contact with French Freemasonry.

As exemplified by the writings of Alan Braham and Monique Mosser, the identification of Masonic ideas in architecture has moved only recently from the general to the particular, and from theory into form. When Braham confers on Ledoux the distinction of creating "the one major project of the time directly inspired by masonic, or crypto-masonic, ideas,"[4] it is the spirit of the project that he is characterising. Elsewhere, while examining the symbolism of two elemental signs, Mosser draws a striking analogy between one of Ledoux's passageways and the phases of Masonic initiation: what she has retained from the building

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[4]. Alan Braham, The Architecture of the French Enlightenment (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989) p. 160. Braham is referring to the Ideal City of Chaux. He goes on to explain Ledoux's concerns and functional emphases as direct applications of Masonic ideas. See Braham, pp. 206-208.

is its Masonic effect, one of primordial terror and secrecy.[5] Vidler, whose first article on the subject is cited by both authors,[6] has grown more specific still in his interpretation. Closely adhering to the work, he parses and translates its structural and figurative language according to his cognizance of the Order.

Vidler's Masonic reading of Ledoux is delimited by two factors: he is hampered by the lack of proof of Ledoux's membership in a specific lodge; more seriously, he is limited by his own understanding of pre-Revolutionary French Freemasonry, by a tendency to ascribe to the Brotherhood a lofty and unified purpose that its tumultuous history often denies. What he seeks therefore as a Masonic sign is a programmatic rationale pointing toward social improvement. Vidler perceives the outline of an enlightened Freemasonry in Ledoux's progressive and utopian projects - the Saline built at Chaux and the unrealized Ideal City - and within that framework picks out the elements of a Masonic code. Extraneous and somewhat vexatious to this reading are the appearances of those same elements in a project popularly reviled, in Ledoux's network of customs houses - the Barrières - erected in the last days of the Ancien Régime for the economic benefit of the Farmers-General. Masonic tendencies are detectable in specific plans and in the disposition of buildings around the circle; they are present also in the iconography of the decoration; they are suggested by Ledoux's impassioned defence of the project and by the hyperbolic name he gave it - the Propylaea. Broad Masonic hints go unremarked by Vidler when the project as a whole resists his idea of Freemasonry's social agenda.

It accords with the early history of Freemasonry to think not of one but

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[5]. Monique Mosser, "Le rocher et la colonne/Un thème d'iconographie architecturale au XVIIIe siècle," in Revue de l'art, Vol. 58-59, 1983, pp. 53-74.

[6]. Anthony Vidler, 'The Architecture of the Lodges: Ritual Form and Associational Life in the Late Enlightenment,' in Oppositions 5 (Summer 1976), pp. 76-97.

of many Masonic orders, evolving in several directions at once and replete with the virtues and vices of any hierarchical society of men. Among his sources, Vidler lists a number of Masonic histories, including Pierre Chevallier's three-volume Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie française which insists on that very point. In his close reading of Ledoux, the cobbled, sometimes chaotic, syncretism of eighteenth-century French Freemasonry has evaded Vidler, depriving his Masonic theme of the human dimension and variation that are its due.[7]

Overall, Vidler has not been single-minded in his interpretation. His monograph is composed of overarching schema mainly drawn outside the circle of the Brotherhood. He includes Ledoux's education, architectural training, professional ambitions, public persona and character. He narrows the definition of Ledoux's originality, proposing typological precedents, from contemporaneous projects, as well as from Ledoux's image of the classical past. He sees in Ledoux's ultimate monument - his unfinished five-volume revisionist history of a life's work - echoes of the intellectual and political movements of the day. In the confessional narrative of the architect-traveller, he hears the appropriated voices of the Physiocrats, the encyclopedists, the 'philosophes' and the adepts.

Despite the lack of irrefutable evidence, Vidler's Masonic reading of Ledoux is driven by speculation that Ledoux belonged either to a Masonic lodge or to some crypto-Masonic cult. His hypothesis raises two rather thorny questions. Had Ledoux been a member of the Order, would he not have been prevented by his oath of initiation from revealing its secrets? Conversely, were he not a Mason, how would he have known the Masonic symbols that he used in his work? This paper flows from another

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[7]. In The Writing of the Walls, Vidler acknowledged the "'ideological' split" in pre-Revolutionary French Freemasonry, "divisions...no doubt reinforced by the predominantly class lines along which their membership tended to align." See Vidler, p. 96. Had Ledoux been a Mason, he would have had to find a place on one side or the other of that social and ideological divide.

series of assumptions on a more comprehensive line of inquiry.

Ledoux operated in the public eye. He designed to build. What he incorporated into his work was public and, given the prominence of his projects and the sophistication of his clients, he doubtless formulated explanations for the plans, elevations and decorative programmes of his commissioned work. The Masonic in Ledoux, if it exists at all, can only be the public expression of Freemasonry, not necessarily fully accessible to all, but to the patron, justifiable, acceptable, desirable, or all three.

The intention of this paper is to explore the public expression of Freemasonry by establishing the sources and accessibility of its symbolic code. The history and paradoxical nature of pre-Revolutionary French Freemasonry are reviewed to establish the eighteenth-century divagations of the Order. From Vidler, Braham, and other sources, examples of Masonic symbolism in the work of Ledoux's contemporaries are proposed. Vidler's Masonic reading of two projects - the Saline de Chaux and the Ideal City of Chaux - is reported; further citations from the same source describe similar manifestations of Freemasonry in Ledoux's other work. From biographical material, Ledoux's membership or connection to the Order is considered. Against this backdrop, the symbolism of the Propylaea is examined and, from all these examples, the specificity and importance of Freemasonry is inserted into the broader context of the iconographic revival of the age.

My initial exploration of Masonic symbolism in Ledoux's Propylaea took comfort from previous scholars' speculations, especially from Vidler's attempt to discern in Ledoux's buildings concrete examples of Masonic form.[8] In an earlier essay, without questioning Vidler's reluctance to

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[8]. In addition to the previously cited article, "The Architecture of the Lodges...," Vidler's earlier treatments of the subject are in his introduction to Architecture de C. N. Ledoux, facsimile edition of L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation, ed. Daniel Ramée (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Ledoux (Paris:

do so, I overlaid the same motifs on the Barrières; the results of that exercise are recapitulated in Chapter IV. Building on that research, my approach to the subject has changed. The Masonic image in Ledoux's work is highly impressionistic, not a codification but an abstraction from a system of ideas. In the declamatory rhetoric of Ledoux, in his 'architecture parlante,' the voice of Freemasonry never rises above a murmur.

Is his exploitation of Masonic symbolism genuine or slavish to the social phenomenon of the day? Is its ambiguity a function of Masonic secrecy or merely the betrayal of Ledoux's incomplete knowledge? Is Ledoux's distillation of Masonic symbols the poeticization of an arcana or its crassest degradation?

These are the problems that make Ledoux a compelling study in Masonic influence. Although this essay will demonstrate Freemasonry's imprint on his work, I am less concerned with assigning meaning to symbols than with recognizing the rapid migration of those symbols from a closed system into the public sphere. To date, that recognition has been far from automatic. Commemorative and propagandistic engravings of the 1790s frequently include two icons of Masonic symbolism: the level and the all-seeing eye. In a discussion of Revolutionary symbols, Robert L. Herbert illustrates his text with two engravings: L. C. Ruotte's Liberty and Equality united by Nature, c. 1793, and an anonymous work of the same year depicting the busts of Lepeletier, Marat and Chalier, Martyrs to Liberty, gathered to the image of France's Phrygian-capped maiden.[9] In both prints, reproduced side by side in Herbert's book, is the Masonic sign of Equality, the level. In the first example, this is mistakenly identified as Liberty's scales, while in the second, the emblem, which floats above Liberty's head, is simply ignored.

Fernand Lazan, 1987); and The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[9]. Robert L. Herbert, J. L. David: Brutus (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972) pp. 99-101.

Elsewhere, the appearance in an engraving of the all-seeing eye is attributed to Egyptian origins,[10] leaving the reader to decide whether the symbol was, in its time, original, contextual or universal. Freemasonry is not mentioned.

The challenging complexity of the Order teaches one to sympathize with historians who have ignored its influence or held it within strict interpretational bounds. Expanding on one such reading, this essay is a small but necessary step toward measuring the true share of Freemasonry in the ecumenical foundations of Neoclassical art.

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[10]. Stephen R. Ongpin, catalogue entry on Simon-Louis Boizot's An Allegorical Figure of the French Republic in 1798: French Art During the Revolution, ed. Alan Wintermute, exh. cat., Colnaghi, New York, 1989, pp. 98-100. There are other examples in the same publication of unmentioned Masonic signs: levels in a print by Vien (illustrated on p. 33) and an anonymous allegorical watercolour of the late 18th century (pp. 200-202). The symbols are simply categorized as Revolutionary.

Chapter I: French Freemasonry of the Neoclassical Period: History and Iconography

Freemasonry is a fascinating study in contradiction. Open it at any point: Masonic history is a Pandora's Box of disparate social, political and philosophical ideas, unified only by a greater force, the mysterious appeal of forbidden knowledge.[11] Equally dense and multivalent, the iconography of the Order has served a dual function, encoding and preserving the secrets of Freemasonry while disseminating metaphorically its principles.

This strange marriage of obfuscation and proclamation is first met in the apparent transparency of the name. Freemasonry implies brotherhood. Fraternity, equality, tolerance, strength and unity are the pillars of Masonic expression. Discretion is another and, despite a history of schisms and betrayal, the idea of secrecy has remained intact with Masonic iconography developed to protect it. The Order has survived two dangerous centuries by surrounding its members with a distracting profusion of esoteric and mutating signs.

From the beginning, these were never simple. The earliest infiltrations of the lodges were rewarded by shows of compound ritual while the outside activities of the members - their political and social endeavours as well as their artistic creations - seemed successfully to combine the Masonic with the profane.

For the unitiated observer, the riddle of Freemasonry resides less in its doctrines than in the architecture of its iconography; in the accrual and adaptation of existent iconographic systems to the needs of the Order; in the interdependence of tradition and innovation; in

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[11]. "L'irrationalité du secret définit une légitimité, la valeur du secret est au coeur des tensions, au coeur de la remise en cause." Daniel Roche, "La sociabilité maçonnique et les Lumières," in Franc-Maçonnerie et Lumières au Seuil de la Révolution Française (Paris: Institut d'Études et de Recherches Maçonniques/Grand Orient de France, 1984) p. 109.

the internal logic and external expression of a Modern symbology.

The very etymology of the name - a contentious subject by no means exhausted - exemplifies the thickness of Masonic language and its capacity to accomodate both the temporal and the spiritual in a single sign.

Eighteenth-century Freemasonry is an invention of the English whose semantic allegiance to an upright corps of Medieval builders seemed to express the espoused egalitarianism of their order. At best, the new Freemasons were deceived by the name for, even in its earliest English adaptation, it was never so open and ingenuous.

In the fourteenth century, when the term "freemason" first appeared in England,[12] it already carried with it a certain status. Not surprisingly, the provenance of the word is French, derived from the expression, "mestre mason de franche peer," "master freestone mason" or master of the "pierre franche," a fine-grained stone, suitable for carving. Rudimentary knowledge of geometry and some artistic ability to carve set the craftsman above the stone worker, the "roughmason."[13]

In England, the term continued to accumulate prestige. The organization of masons into guilds transformed the "free masons" into itinerant skilled workers. Through further emancipation "freemasons" also became "freemen" instead of "bondsmen," again enhancing the designation. The corporative power of the guilds introduced still another category. The "accepted" freemason, who had passed from apprentice to master, had to be differentiated from the member who had purchased entry. This distinction took on greater importance through the Renaissance and the

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[12]. "Freemason," in The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 1076.

[13]. Florence de Lussy, "Un moment singulier de la corporation des maçons en Angleterre - 1717/1719," in Franc-Maçonnerie et Lumières au Seuil de la Révolution Française, pp 93-101. The author traces the etymology of "freemasonry" and its evolution from guild to intellectual society in Britain.

Reformation as the fraternity of practitioners became increasingly dominated by those buying their way into lucrative corporate charters. By the seventeenth century, the Right Worshipful Fraternity of Accepted Free Masons was struggling to survive. London's Great Fire of 1666, which caused the thirty-five-year rebuilding of Saint Paul's Cathedral, rekindled life in five functioning lodges.

In 1717, there remained in London four lodges that united to advance the interests of the trade. The organization was joined in 1719 by Jean-Théophile Désaguliers, Isaac Newton's secretary who also belonged to the Royal Society. Within the space of a few years, one Mason in four was also a fellow of the Royal Society, scientists rubbing elbows with practicing geometricians in a utopian social experiment.[14] To cleave themselves from the original members who were called "operative" freemasons, the progressive Freemasons were called "speculative," not for their hidden talents as financiers but for their intellectual powers of observation and analysis.

The new modifier came from 'specula,' the Latin word for watch-tower, itself rooted in the verb 'specere,' to look about.[15] The English lodges were viewed as places of speculation where questions could be examined from all sides. Unconsciously perhaps, the eighteenth-century innovator was merely following his forebear's societal ascent.

Speculative Freemasonry attracted educated men of disparate rank and varied professions, including architects whose professional status initially was enhanced by the flattering vocabulary of the lodge.[16] In

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[14]. Lussy, p. 100.

[15]. "Speculate," in The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, p. 2952.

[16]. Eventually, even the administration of the lodges was conducted in architectural language. In France the minutes were called 'Morceaux d'architecture' as were various entertainments, musical or literary, especially the offerings of initiates.

1723, James Anderson's Constitutions gathered up the history of the Order and enshrined its masonic vocabulary as an instrument of figurative, rather than technical, expression.

In 1725, when Freemasonry migrated from London to Paris, the repatriation of the term went unrecognized. The name was a function of Anglomania: eventually, the assonant "frimaçon" would be dropped in favour of a purified "franc-maçonnerie." The Order was received in France by a community of Jacobites who dated their residency (and the first French lodges) to the seventeenth-century exile of the Stuarts and to the entrance of Irish and Scottish regimental officers into the service of the French king. Their eighteenth-century leader, Charles Radclyffe, the future Lord Derwentwater, dreamed of turning the Brotherhood into a chivalric order. The purpose and identity of the first French lodges have intrigued modern historians, given the philosophical differences between Catholic émigrés soldiers and the Deist, though nominally Protestant, mission of the English founders.[17] Anderson's Constitutions were translated into French in 1736, thus disseminating in France the British myth of genesis with its symbolic link between eighteenth-century society and the Medieval builder. The military arm would not, however, be abandoned by the French and heraldic imagery persisted. Both before and after the Revolution, Freemasons expressed unity in the imperial form of centralized authority, the fasces.

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If the parentage of French Freemasonry remains mixed and obscure, the moment of its first vulgarization is a matter of public record. In the winter of 1736-37, Church and State, both embodied by Cardinal de Fleury, instigated police surveillance, harassment and infiltration of Masonic meetings. Fleury's was an invaluable service to history, for

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[17]. Pierre Chevallier, Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie française (1725 - 1799) (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1974) p. 6.

the descriptions in the official reports, some unearthed only recently, are the earliest sources of information on the rites and appointments of the first Masonic temples. As an act of suppression, the effort was doomed to failure since the impossible idea was to discourage the secret society without giving it undue attention. On March 23, 1737, a regular correspondent of Voltaire, one Berger, wrote from Paris, commenting with ill-concealed fascination on the effect of official disapproval.

> On ne parle icy que des nouveaux progrès que fait tous les jours, l'ordre des frimaçons. Tous les grands et les petits s'en font également recevoir...on voit des gens raisonnables assez fous pour se lier par un serment affreux à garder un secret sur des choses qu'ils n'apprennent qu'après qu'ils ont juré.[18]

With contradictoriness typical of the Order, it is the same historical moment that reaffirms Freemasonry's highest fraternal principles while slamming the temple door on the profane. The Discours of Michel André de Ramsay, first pronounced in December 1736, is a catechism of tolerance and discretion. It argues for the universality of a pre-Christian Freemasonry, returning to the Masonic patriarch, Noah, then moving forward in time, through the Egyptians and the Greeks, carrying their mysteries into the present via the Crusades. Ramsay's history, a testament to his curious and catholic mind, later became the basis of French Freemasonry's Scottish Rite, a vertiginous stepped pyramid of knowledge reduced by some lodges to a frivolous social climb.

The first generation of French Freemasons met undisturbed and in relative obscurity. They used inns and eating-houses where they could be properly and privately fortified with food and drink. Until 1745, Masonic symbols were simply crayonned on the floor; later, the decor

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[18]. Chevallier, p. 15.

could be rented from one of several Masonic suppliers.[19] These halcyon days lasted until the middle thirties when information about the Order began to leak out through the Court and the police. The Brotherhood was already in transformation: ceremony had begun to replace conviviality in the lodge. The aristocracy was growing bored and somewhat offended by the pretentious inclinations of their bourgeois brothers; the first fissures along class lines were beginning to appear. In 1743, assuring themselves the attention of the Court, a fraternity of commoners elected as Grand-Master a prince of the blood, the Comte de Clermont. His platform was never social reform: in 1749, he outlined his aspirations in a letter to his young protegé, a future Masonic leader.

> The philosophy of this century is to desire wealth, provided that it is not ill-gotten. With property, one is everything; in poverty, one is nothing...One must conclude that the true philosophy joins birth and sensibility to fortune...[20]

Clermont and his class, who formed the leadership of the Grande-Loge, wished, in the true spirit of Ramsay, to perpetuate the original form of Symbolic Freemasonry: three levels - Apprentice, Companion and Master - expressed by the builder's lexicon - the hewn stone, the level and the square - and the ecumenical impulses embodied figuratively in the Temple of Solomon. A growing cadre of Scottish Masters,[21] had their own interpretation of Ramsay, justifying a more militantly Catholic and hierarchical version of the Order by their own reading of the Solomonic myth.

Clermont's was a distracted leadership. The Scottish Rite would prevail

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[19]. Daniel Ligou, "Recherches sur le rite français," in Franc-maçonnerie et Lumières au Seuil de la Révolution Française, p. 63.

[20]. Chevallier, p. 111. The translation is mine.

[21]. Previously known as The Reformed, The Pacific Serpents, The Silent or The Architects. See Chevallier, p. 85. The translations are mine.

aided by the disclosure of secret Masonic rituals in pamphlets and books such as Le Secret des Franc-Maçons, Catéchisme des Franc-Maçons, Le Sceau rompu, La Réception mystérieuse, L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons trahi and Les Franc-Maçons écrasés, published between 1744 and 1746 [22] The untitled membership was encouraged by the crisis to change and complexify the Order's practices and codes. Without abandoning the symbolic cornerstone of Freemasonry, they seized the opportunity to overshadow its uncomfortably humble origins by emphasizing a new company of founders, not the builders but the rebuilders and protectors of the Temple.

Thirty-three levels spiraled upward through the Order: entered the new legends, motifs, costumes, titles, rituals and obligations, such as the oath of the Elect who vowed to avenge the murder of Solomon's architect Hiram Abif.[23] The history of the guilds slipped into the background; the Freemason, become Knight of the Orient, was transformed into a modern Templar, nobly associated with the Christian recapture of the Holy Land. The expanded vocabulary of the Order flowed from this vessel: the Masonic symbol was the secret code of the Crusaders, their linguistic defense against the infidel.[24] Ramsay's claim for the Order's antidiluvian beginnings and the invocation of King Solomon also conjured up alchemy and the occult, images which mixed freely with Medieval and heraldic signs: the Order became a composite of Cabala, Gnosticism, Christianity and Deism, combined in varying proportions to startling and mystifying effect.

The dominant conceits and the tip of an iconographic iceberg are preserved in the names of the new grades: the Commander of the Temple, the Knight of the Pelican, the Grand Master of the Tabernacle, the

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[22]. Chevallier, pp. 84-86.

[23]. Chevallier, p. 86-87. He notes that in the Master ritual, the assassins escape, while in the Elect ceremony, the participants ritualistically pursue and punish Hiram's murderers.

[24]. Chevallier, pp. 88-89.

Knight of Harmony, the Sublime Prince of Jerusalem, and the Scots of Angers, of Montpellier, of the Small Apartments and of countless other extractions.[25] As the Order was infected by the mysticism of the age, even the proponents of a rational and secular Symbolic Masonry were seduced by the revival of hermeticism and alchemy: to some, enlightenment was the modern equivalent of transmutation. The legends of Solomon and his Temple, of the architect-builder Hiram-Abif, and the attendant masonic symbols were not displaced but accomodated: the mason's hewn stone, cubic with pyramidal point, became the composite of sulphur, salt and mercury. The Knights of the Black Eagle illustrated their ritual with cabalistic drawings; they drew the Pentacle; they claimed possession of the secret name.[26] A lodge in Avignon, joined mainly by aristocrats, integrated Greek and Egyptian Mythology into hermetic practice. Initiates were inculcated with increasing knowledge, in a hierarchical system that began with the three original grades, leading to the higher levels of Real Masons, Real Masons of the Straight Road, Knights of Iris, Knights of the Golden Key, Knights of the Argonauts, Knights of the Golden Fleece and finally, in Gnostic glory, Knights of the Sun.[27]

Midway through its first century, the physical and figurative properties of French Freemasonry were what distinguished it from other social, political or religious associations of the Ancien Régime: in stratification and divisiveness, even the monastic orders were pretty much the same. By the death of the Duc de Clermont in 1771, a Scottish forest of symbols had taken root in French society; equality and sociability were in its shadow.[28] It was left to the men of the next generation, to a young, progressive aristocracy, to restore the founding principles of the Order, imposing their liberalism with a firm ruling

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[25]. Chevallier, p. 94. The translations are mine.

[26]. Chevallier, p. 234. The translations are mine.

[27]. Chevallier, p. 218. The translations are mine.

[28]. Chevallier, pp. 146-147.

hand.[29]

The designated successor of the Duc de Clermont was also a prince of the blood, Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, the Duc de Chartres. But the administration of the Grande-Loge, including statutory reforms and the reconciliation of dissenting Masonic factions, fell on the shoulders of another, more focussed individual, the Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg. His management of the Order lasted until the Revolution, over a quarter-century of stabilization and expansion. Certainly, the image of Freemasonry was improved with articles like de Lalande's for the Encyclopédie, Supplément of 1777 which confirmed publicly both the highest goals and the exclusiveness of the Masonic circle.

> The society or order of Freemasons is the bringing together of chosen peoples who join themselves together by the obligation to love each other like brothers, to aid each other in need, and, above all, to protect with an inviolable silence whatever has to do with their order. The way Freemasons recognize one another in whatever country they might be is part of their secret; this is a way of rallying together, even amidst those who are strangers to them and whom they call profane.[30]

Freemasonry's generous social programme was limited, however, to its membership. For Vidler, the early persecutions of the Order set the course for its protective isolation: how else to pursue with "security" and "decency" their revolutionary concepts of interaction between men of different classes?[31] Operating in "a climate of severe political and

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[29]. Chevallier, p. 178.

[30]. Jérôme de Lalande, 'Franc-Maçons,' in Encyclopédie, Supplément (Paris, 1777); translated by Anthony Vidler, in The Writing of the Walls, note 11, p. 207.

[31]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 84. He quotes de Lalande's speech at the opening of the first permanent home for the Grand-Orient.

religious censorship," the lodge became a haven of free speech: "free will, comparative religion, ideal commonwealths with egalitarian constitutions, changing moralities, and the scientific exploration of potentially heretical subjects."[32] It only follows that the experiment had to be conducted with men of the highest moral and intellectual standard. Lesser individuals had to be kept out.

Chevallier, who sees the flaws in this position, accepts Freemasonry's myopia as endemic to France at that time: Freemasonry was a microcosm of French pre-Revolutionary society, with liberal impulses emanating from the centre and an absolute innocence of the societal picture that would form itself after 1789.[33] In the advent of the Revolution, Freemasonry reaffirmed its beliefs in fraternity, tolerance and equality. It celebrated them in song.[34] But the actualization of these beliefs has been challenged by the somewhat damming demographics of the Order which was highly selective in its composition and protective of its "chosen people." The chosen, as Chevallier has noted, rarely included Jews and the historian's attention is drawn also to de Lalande's apparent reluctance to admit publicly his atheism. Chevallier speculates that such extreme free thought would not have been tolerated under Montmorency's Grand Orient despite its democratic rhetoric and procedural reforms.[35]

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[32]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 84.

[33]. Chevallier, p. 304.

[34]. Of two hundred songs printed in anthologies between 1740 and 1789, five words come up more than one hundred and fifty times: virtue, friendship, wisdom, vulgar and profane. Ranked next by occurence (between fifty and one hundred times) are: the secret, the Golden Age, the Supreme Being, happiness, homage, time, man, delight, the king, love, nature, the Royal Art, discretion, peace and innocence. Daniel Roche sees in the repetition of these themes a tripartite expression of the ideals of Masonic sociability: moral polyphony; social and political harmony; the concept of the Order as the organizer of a selected elite. See Roche, pp. 112-113.

[35]. Chevallier, p. 302.

The theory of a Masonic Revolutionary conspiracy has long been discarded, replaced by a general acceptance of Freemasonry's catalytic role as a laboratory for social change. Within the lodge, the experiment had been controlled by recruitment; the sociology of that process has yet to be fully understood. What is clear is the limited transferability of tolerance and social relaxation from within to without the Temple walls. Whether eighteenth-century Freemasonry should be evaluated as an agent of the Enlightenment or merely as its reflection, what occurs inside the circle rehearses both actually and ceremonially the enlightened and reactionary movements of the profane world. Paradoxically, as Freemasonry was effaced temporarily by the maelstrom of the Revolution, its delimited egalitarianism became the model for new social structures. As a vague and idealized paradigm, it may have achieved its greatest triumph.[36]

In the period under consideration, the Order had already begun to blossom thanks to the patronage of Chartres and the stewardship of Montmorency-Luxembourg. Within a year of the Grand Master's official installation, the Grand-Orient had found and renovated permanent quarters, occasioning their Grand Orator, de Lalande, to revisit the old vulnerabilities in his opening remarks. From 1774, the foundation of permanent temples, as a practical and ceremonial act of constitution, was imposed by statute on lodges all over France. Relatively secure, and emboldened by the status of its members, Freemasonry began with characteristic discretion to erect a network of monuments.

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The evolution of the lodge from cloister to temple can be traced through a number of contemporaneous descriptions: the hostile police report on the invasion of the Hôtel de Soissons of the 8th of June, 1745; the glorious installation of Chartres on October 22nd, 1773; the initiation

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[36]. Michel Vovelle, "Introduction," in Franc-Maçonnerie et Lumières au Seuil de la Révolution Française, pp. 18-19.

of Voltaire by the Loge des Neufs Soeurs, on the 7th of April, 1778; his sublime memorial service, conducted by the lodge on November 28th of the same year.[37]

When the commissioner Delavergée and his two inspectors burst into the third-floor suite of the Hôtel de Soissons, they advanced through a sequence of five rooms, where they met fifteen or sixteen individuals, one of whom knocked on the door of a sixth room, wherein were gathered twenty-four or twenty-five more, each wearing a white leather apron, tied around the body, and attached at the top by a button. They were found standing in two rows around a carpet with Masonic symbols. The various accoutrements of the hall included three copper candlesticks; a pedestal on which lay open a folio volume, inscribed "The New Testament," with, in red, blue and gold letters, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Saint John." It was noted that each side of the cover represented "a faith," and that the Gospel reproduced was, with one Jansenist addition, the one delivered at the end of the Mass. There was as well as a verse from Psalm 132, "Qu'il est bon et qu'il est agréable pour les frères d'habiter ensemble,"[38] an extract from Exodus, Chapters XIX and XX, including the first commandment of the Decalogue and part of the second. Behind the pedestal stood two individuals; the one on the right wearing blue and red cordons round his neck, the blue denoting the symbolic grade of Worshipful Master[39], the red of Scottish Master. Penetrating deeper into the apartment, the commissioner entered a closet where he discovered a canvas bag painted green, used for the reception of a Master, and one volume of the Abrégé historique de la

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[37]. Dates are from Chevallier. There are many discrepancies in the literature. Ligou, for example, gives the 8th of May, 1746, as the date of the Soissons raid. A report on Soissons of the 8th of June, 1745, is attributed to an infiltrator.

[38]. Psalm 133, according to the Jerusalem Bible: "How good, how delightful it is/for all to live together like brothers..."

[39]. The French equivalent of Worshipful Master is 'Vénérable.' The three senior officers of the Symbolic Lodge are the Worshipful Master and the two Wardens.

Bible, by the Minim friar, "père de Saint-André," that being Volume III including Ezekiel and Daniel.[40]

According to Daniel Ligou, the Hôtel de Soissons's painted Masonic carpet must have been a very early example of its kind. The painted carpet was an appointment of the lodge which did not come into common usage until 1760; as late as 1786, some lodges considered its use to be an error. Until then, the prudent, and so it follows, correct practice was to draw the designs on the floor. Depending on the Masonic grade, the motifs were different. For the Apprentice, one author reports the letters J and B, the square, the compass, the sun and the moon. Another describes a portico with two columns, the sun, the moon, a star, two types of Masonic levels, and "d'autres choses." Another speaks of a square carpet marked with white chalk with sun, moon, compasses, squares, levels, stars, columns and the four cardinal points. To the description of Soissons can be added the paintings of a compass, a square and a mallet, all on the pedestal.[41] The Bible was surmounted by a compass.[42] The rooms were candlelit with candlesticks or candelabra in triangular formation - nine lights in groups of three.

The distribution of these elements can be seen in the illustrations of floor drawings by Abbé Larudan.[43] He detailed the plans for five grades, including the Companion, given short-shrift by Perau, who

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[40]. This is a paraphrased version of Chevallier's account of the raid which he based on the police officer's report, unearthed in 1968, pp. 58-59.

[41]. These variant reports are taken mainly from the revelations of Abbé Perau (L'Ordre des Francs Maçons trahi et ses secrets révélés, Paris, 1742), Abbé Larudan (Les Franc Maçons Écrasés, Amsterdam, 1746) and Travenol, whose pseudonym was Gabanon (Catéchism des Francs Maçons, Paris, 1744). Of these, Daniel Ligou considers Perau's the most impartial. The titles are here given as listed by Ligou, p. 60.

[42]. Ligou, p. 67.

[43]. Vidler, illustrations 72-74: Apprentice, Companion and Master.

insists only on the symbol of the hewn stone.[44] [Illustration 1] Larudan's drawing includes columns, a basin, porticoes, candlesticks, the square, the compass, the level, the mallet, and other emblems, organized in three-tiered progression toward an altar.

Of the Master's floor plan, Perau describes the mosaic tile, the tassels, the dais sprinkled with stars, the plumb line, the replica of the tomb of Hiram, the "Jehovah," the compass, the square and the mallet,[45] most of which can be seen in Larudan's illustration, where Hiram's skull and crossbones are the centre of a blasted architecture: broken columns, smashed stairs, worn tiles and crumbling walls. [Illustration 2]

Each of these designs was an allegorical equivalent for the Temple of Solomon,[46] its iconography dictated by the trials and decorations of the particular grade. The correct path through this maze was prescribed by the ritual, which was orally transmitted to the initiate who committed it to memory and vowed never to disclose it.[47] Eighteenth-century Masonic records shroud these rites in the vaguest possible language, simplifying their choreography, discouraging even the most ambiguous mention with equally veiled threats.[48] Even Perau's divulgation is none too specific. He speaks of the blindfolded initiate's terrifying journey from the chamber of reflections, past the mock swordfights and three times round the room, through the cacophonous accompaniment of the brothers and harassment at every turn, to stand finally before the

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[44]. Ligou, p. 64.

[45]. Ligou, p. 65.

[46]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 87.

[47]. Ironically, as Ligou has noted, the complicated mythology of the higher grades proved almost impossible to memorize and had to be set down in writing, hastening its promulgation to the profane. See Ligou, pp. 57-58.

[48]. Ligou, pp. 56-57.

Master.[49] The voyage around the lodge began in the North, and clockwise, "following the movement of the Sun," continued to the East, then to the South. The initiate was challenged on his rounds by the Junior Warden[50], who sat at the column to the North of the entrance, JAKIN, then by the Senior Warden, at the South column, BOAZ.[51] On the earliest evidence, JAKIN was to the left of the entrance (on the right of the Worshipful Master) and BOAZ was to right (to the left of the Worshipful Master).

In terms of the position of the columns and orientation of the temple, the period that continues to trouble Masonic scholars is the middle period of the eighteenth century, between the divulgations and the establishment of permanent temples. In Britain, where such betrayals had also taken place, certain inversions were introduced to counteract the divulgations; this practice apparently was not followed in France;[52] the symbolism of the three foundational grades survived intact.[53] Accordingly, at least in France, the orientation of the Temple appears to have maintained an east-west axis with its entrance between two columns in the West, where sat the Wardens, to pay the Tilers or workers and close the lodge, "as the Sun terminates its journey in the West." [54] One can be as certain of the assigned places of two other officers, the Orator and the Secretary, who stood by the Worshipful Master in the

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[49]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, pp. 87-88.

[50]. The French translation of "warden" is "surveillant." There are two: "le premier surveillant et le second surveillant."

[51]. Ligou, pp. 76-77. This arrangement is reversed in some Rites but the triangular arrangement (triangle within the square) is maintained. See Albert G. Mackey, "Wardens," in Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Three Volumes (Chicago: The Masonic History Company, 1946) p. 1088.

[52]. Ligou, p. 60.

[53]. Ligou, p. 58.

[54]. Ligou, pp. 71-72.

East.[55]

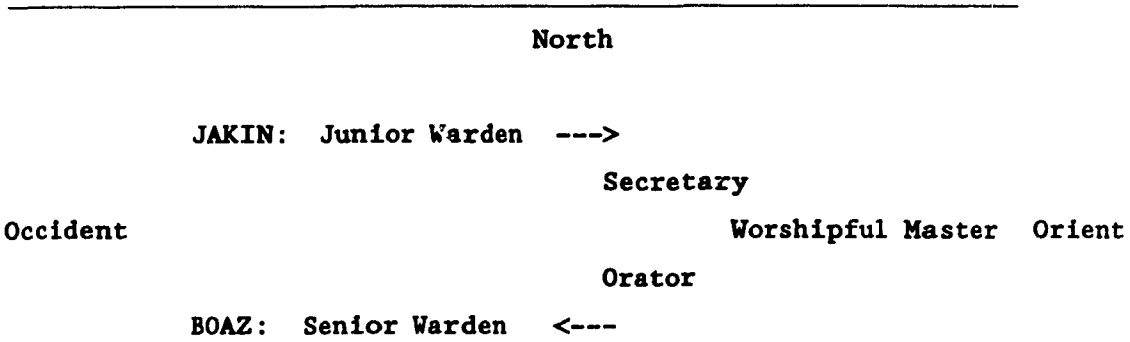

Figure 1. Interior plan of the lodges

From the 1760s onward, this distribution is evident in the decoration of artifacts, notably Voltaire's Masonic apron[56] and George Washington's, embroidered for him before 1784 by the wife of General Lafayette (née Adrienne de Noailles) with a naive perspective rendering of the interior of a lodge.[57]

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55. Ligou, p. 72.

56. Ligou, p. 72.

57. Mackey, "George Washington's Masonic Apron," pp. 97-98.

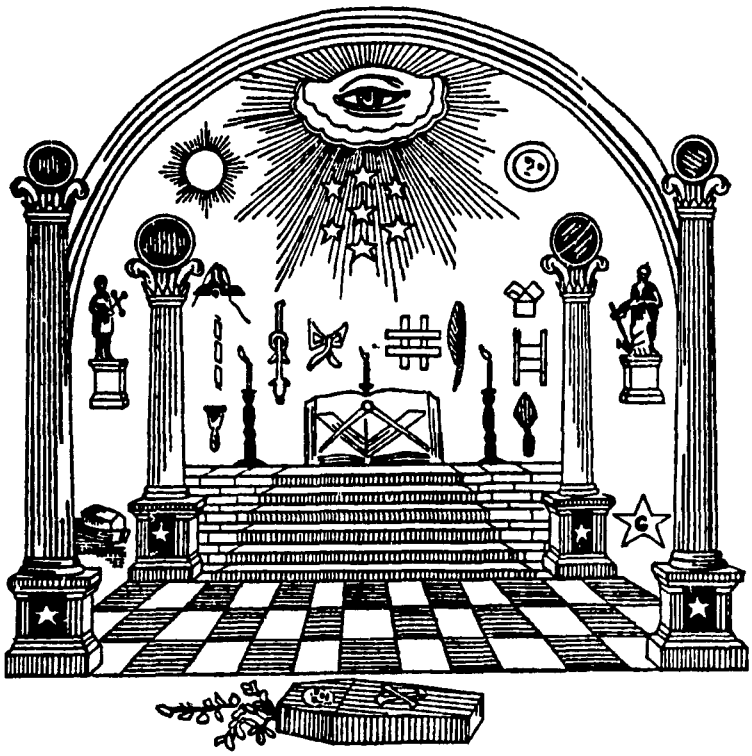

Figure 2. Rendering of George Washington's Masonic Apron

Missing from these still and schematic images is their cumulative effect: the atmosphere of the temples which, at least on recorded occasions, shone with ceremonial splendour.

The installation of the Duc de Chartres as Grand-Master took place in 1772, in a temporary meeting-place, one of the prince's own houses,[58] that had been decorated lavishly for the event. A vast gallery had been draped in flame coloured fabric. The perfect numbers of candles had been lit: 81 for the Masonic people; 66 for the officers of the Order. The Orient was hung with crimsom velvet, sprinkled with golden lilies. In the Occident, a setting sun was crowned by its expiring rays. The vault of the gallery was blue, twinkling with stars and bordered by gold tassel. The honourary officers sat in armchairs at the Orient while the functioning officers were assigned benches on the perimeter of the room. All the participants were dressed in fiery colours and armed with Masonic tools.

At the ritual hour of noon, the Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg began the ceremonies; the Grand-Master-elect, waiting in the antechamber, was advised that the workers had gathered in the workshop; he asked to be announced to the assembly and was conducted by five brothers under an arch of swords to the Orient where the chief presiding officer heard his vow, gave him the kiss of peace, presented him with the first mallet and

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[58]. This was the La Folie Titon, in the rue de Montreuil. An element of confusion has been introduced by Braham who footnotes his description of the Hôtel de Titon built in the late 1770s by Jean-Charles Delafosse (1734-1791) at number 58, rue du Faubourg-Poissonière, with references to a Masonic meeting at the "Folie-Titon." See Braham, notes to p. 235 on p. 276. The initiation of the duc de Chartres took place at the house on the rue de Montreuil in 1773, soon after which the Grand-Orient was established in permanent quarters. There may be a family connection between Titon and Chartres but Braham does not make it, nor does he attempt to place Delafosse within Masonic circles. The idea is appealing, given Delafosse's Nouvelle Iconologie Historique ou Attributs Hiéroglyphiques qui ont pour objets les quatre élémens, les quatre saisons, les quatre parties du monde et les différents complexions de l'Homme (1768). Delafosse's ambition was to trace the iconography, "tant Sacrée que Prophane," from the creation of the world to the present. "Le Soleil produisant l"Arc-en-Ciel, est le Symbole de l'Etre Suprême qui debrouilla le Cahos. L'Aigle et le Foudre désignent Jupiter Roi d'Egypte, qui distinguant le premier la diversité des 4 Saisons, leur donna le nom qu'elles portent, et en fixa la durée. Les Colônes couvertes à moitié d'écorces d'arbres dont les racines forment les bases, figurent l'origine des arts et des Talens, qui naquirent de l'industrie humaine." His text is pregnant with Masonic meaning but his connection to the Order, to my knowledge, has not been explored.

installed him. Amidst a battery of applause, the Herald-of-arms took up the flamboyant sword while the Warden grasped his mallet. The Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg renewed his vow before the new Grand-Master, followed by a speech by the Grand-Orator that allowed the Grand-Master graciously to refuse the resignations of the Order's elected officers. Their vows having been renewed, the Grand Master proceeded to the administrative duties of the day, including the posing of his seal on the minutes. The general assembly then divided into three workshops, each composed of 21 deputies, representing the administration of the Order, and the two constituencies of Paris and the Provinces. The Grand-Master, led by the Grand-Hospitaler, holding the flamboyant sword, moved through the workshops, certifying and sealing their documents, and presenting their leaders with mallets. The ceremonies ended, it was time for the banquet.[59]

The initiation of Voltaire took place in 1778 during a flurry of celebration mounted on the octogenarian's triumphant return to Paris for the debut of his play, Irene. The exhausting adulation of the capital may have contributed to Voltaire's death the same year; certainly his pressing schedule and flagging energies factored into the design of his initiation which was a brief, though ecstatic, affair.

As an initiate, Voltaire was certainly a prize, not least because of his previously disparaging attitude toward the Order which he had outlined in an article on "Initiation" in his Dictionaire philosophique of 1762. That he would have been persuaded to participate in the Order's "dull mysteries"[60] indicates prior knowledge of the membership and constitution of the lodge that won him. The anomalous Loge des Neufs

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[59]. Chevallier, pp. 170-173.

[60]. Voltaire's article insists on the secrets of the Order which he suspects are no more worth keeping than the secrets of Carmelite and Capucine convents. He shows some understanding of the mysteries when he writes: "Que les dieux cabires, les hiérophantes de Samothrace, Isis, Orphée, Cérés, Éleusine, me le pardonnent;" but he is casting a pretty wide net with his ironic invocation. Chevallier, pp. 272-273.

Soeurs required of its initiates "public and sufficient proof of talent, in art or science," and made them swear no oath, but solemnly promise to safeguard humanity and defend the innocent oppressed. By 1778, there were more than one hundred and fifty members including thirteen clerics.[61] The initiation of Voltaire extended beyond the membership to involve other prominent Masons; the temple of the Neuf Soeurs was the seat of the Grand Orient,[62] a converted Jesuit Novitiate, that had been renovated in 1774 by the architect Pierre Poncet.[63]
The lodge occupied a suite of rooms given over to four functions ordered in linear sequence. The colour scheme was different for each room: the first in a multi-coloured flowered cloth; the second in blue and white. Lighting came from crystal chandeliers. The long and narrow main hall was sub-divided into two unequal spaces. The first, measuring 15.5 metres long, 6.4 metres wide and 6.4 metres high (51' long, 21' wide and 21' high) had a blue ceiling and was furnished with a double row of benches; in the West, triangular tables were provided for the Wardens, beside which were two metal columns, each crowned with a cluster of fifteen stars. The second space was separated from the first by a change in level. The Orient, which was reached by stairs, occupied an area of 8.2 metres by 6.4 metres (27' by 21'), with a ceiling height of 10.6 metres (35'), to accomodate a three-tiered stage, surmounted by the grand throne. Behind this hall was another room of equal proportion, the Banquet Hall, which was decorated in blue and red and featured a raised dais for the Grand-Master.[64]

Voltaire was allowed to peek over his blindfold as he made his way through these rooms toward the Orient. Greeted by the busts of Louis XVI, the Grand-Master, Frederick II and the Farmer-General Claude Adrien Helvétius, founder of the Neuf Soeurs, Voltaire was escorted by Benjamin

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61. Chevallier, p. 280.

62. Chevallier, p. 275.

63. Chevallier, p. 174.

64. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, pp. 94-95.

Franklin and Court de Gébelin through the sequence of brilliantly appointed rooms to be questioned on philosophical and moral issues by the Worshipful Master, after which he was unveiled, made to promise, crowned with laurels, wrapped in the apron of Helvétius, enthroned on the dais in the Orient, sketched, and feted with music, poetry and food until he could take no more.[65]

Far more dramatic was his memorial service for which the temple temporarily was draped in black. Gold and silver arches held banners inscribed with Voltaire's writings. In the centre of the hall was a cenotaph on a dais of four steps. It was surmounted by a great pyramid which was guarded by twenty-seven brothers holding unsheathed swords. Before this arrangement were three broken columns: the centre column held the works of Voltaire; the other two supported vases of perfume. Musicians played the priests' march from Alceste and a passage from Ermelinde. Plans were interrupted by the arrival of Voltaire's niece whose admission could not be denied. Masonic rituals were suspended, but the brothers kept their costumes and the planned theatricals were allowed to proceed, though not before a one hundred and twenty page elegy was delivered, between short musical interludes. This part of the programme took approximately two hours. Suddenly, the sepulchral pyramid disappeared in crash of simulated thunder. The dimly lit hall was transformed in brilliance and a 'tableau vivant' of the apotheosis of Voltaire formed itself before the company. The philosopher rose from his tomb, accompanied by Truth and Charity. Envy, defeated by Minerva, could not hold him back. The Worshipful Master de Lalande, the newly-initated painter Greuze and Mme de Villette each laid crowns before the living statues. The programme ended with a reading by the poet Roucher of a protest song composed against the Church for its refusal to grant Voltaire a Christian burial.[66]

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[65]. Chevallier, pp. 275-276.

[66]. Chevallier, pp. 276-278.

It was a timely reminder to the Neuf Soeurs of the overriding authorities of Church, State and the Grand Orient. As the glories of these ceremonies spread through Paris, the Neuf Soeurs would be reined in by the centralized administration of the Order for its imprudent embrace of the heretical Voltaire.[67]

What Voltaire and his daughter had seen, the public also saw vicariously. They penetrated, through gossip and rumour, the inner sanctum of the lodge. Once again, as during the earlier period of divulgation, French Freemasonry achieved a certain degree of notoriety that stimulated both recruitment to the Order and its fragmentation into cultish preserves dominated by healers, spiritualists and charismatic leaders.[68] The eclectic esotericism of these groups, their uncertain Masonic status and their relative indifference to discretion diffused the specificity of the Order, even while they enlarged its vocabulary of symbols and signs. As the original man of Freemasonry, it was offered to the eighteenth-century Masonic architect to make lasting memorials of the Order - to enshrine the patterning of its ritual in form - but conflicting authorities and the obscure symbology of an erasured past leave his monuments veiled in doubt.

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67. Chevallier, pp. 282-283.

68. Chevallier, pp. 211-267; Vidler pp. 95-97.

Chapter II. Masonic Imagery in the Art and Architecture of the Neoclassical Period: The Evolving Image of the Temple

Though the eighteenth-century French architect might have been "the very type of the Freemason,"[69] the formulation of a typical Masonic architecture did not necessarily follow. Freemasonry's relationship to Neoclassical architecture is analogous to its relationship to other eighteenth-century phenomena: outside the lodge, the operations and speculations of its members were both complementary to, and hidden by, the rapid transitions of the age; the tutored radicalism of the initiate was not so very different from the latent radicalism of the profane.

The identification of a Masonic architecture is therefore less a process of clear categorical distinction than a weighing in the balance of common sources and persistent motifs. Always, it should be remembered that the first language of every Mason was an elementary architectonic dialect. The passage from hewn stone to Neoclassical pile was the rhetorical expression of Masonic reception; any building could be its embodiment. For the Mason and architect, an associate, after all, of the Great Architect, this must have presented both a challenge and an inspiration. He was, of course, limited by his oath of secrecy, and by the usual impositions of the building programme, site and patron. But the Neoclassical Mason and architect was also the inventor of a genre. Nourished by an esoteric environment, and encouraged by his elevation in status, the Masonic architect may have introduced into his work elements and evocations of Masonic symbolism and ritual.

Before proceeding to Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, an architect who has not been proven to be a Mason, it seems useful to review the hypotheses of Vidler and other scholars concerning the personalities and professional work of a number who were; within this sampling of architects, and instructed by the history of the Order, other Masonic connections and

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[69]. Jean-Pierre Louis de Béyerlé, Essai de la Franc-Maçonnerie, 1784; quoted by Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 92.

possible allusions can be considered. Dealing with the work, in almost all cases, one is confronted with a design for a public building that is supposed to have concealed its Masonic signature. Given the subject of this examination, which is the public expression of Freemasonry, there is value in controlling one's appetite for Masonic conjecture: to understand better its public reception, the potentially Masonic work should be viewed as it might have been understood by the profane architectural establishment of the day.

A compilation of the Parisian membership of the Grand-Orient, from 1773 to 1789, yields the names of one hundred and twenty architects. From that list, Vidler has highlighted seventeen theoreticians and practitioners: Billiard de Belizard, Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, Jacques Cellérier, Jean-François-Thérèse Chalgrin, Charles Alexandre Guillaumot, Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Pierre-Louis Moreau-Desproux, Jean-Rodolphe Perronet, Louis-François Petit-Radel, Pierre Poncet, Bernard Poyet, J. B. de Puisieux, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, Jean-Baptiste Rondelet, Pierre Rousseau, Antoine Vaudoyer and Charles De Wailly.[70] In the same lodge as De Wailly, Mosser and Rabreau have located another architect, a certain Claude Belisard.[71] From Braham's sources, one can add the names of Victor Louis[72] and Jacques-Germain Soufflot, whose playful poem to

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[70]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 93 and p. 209, n. 49: "This estimate is based on lists published by Alain le Bihan" [Francs-Maçons Parisiens du Grand Orient de France (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1966)] "supplemented by archival sources in the Bibliothèque Nationale. See Jacques Brengues and Monique Mosser, 'Le monde maçonnique des lumières,' in D. Ligou et al., Histoire des Francs-Maçons, 97-158" [Histoire des Francs-Maçons en France (Toulouse, 1981)].

[71]. Monique Mosser and Daniel Rabreau, eds. Charles de Wailly: peintre architecte dans l'Europe des Lumières, exh. cat., Caisse nationale des monuments historiques, Paris, 1979, p. 23.

[72]. Braham, p. 157. On Louis's relationship with the duc de Chartres: "The two had probably first met in Bordeaux in 1776, when Louis designed the decorations for Chartres' [sic] triumphal entry to the town; he had then proceeded belatedly to lay the foundation-stone of the theatre, a ceremony apparently attended by a large masonic contingent. Louis himself was almost

Voltaire, written in 1773, refers jokingly to their brotherhood in Freemasonry.[73] This is a diverse group of men representing several generations of French Neoclassicism,[74] from its birth in the twilight of the Ancien Régime to its Revolutionary and Imperial applications. As its creators, their understanding of the movement is partial, uneven, often conflictual. On the evidence of their work, they appear to be unified only by their vocational interests and by their adherence to the period's stylistic revival of the antique.

Within the limits of this thesis, their careers cannot exhaustively be analyzed.[75] What can be shown are the persistence and development of Masonic tendencies that might have begun simply as social patterns but gathered weight through a process of education, adaptation and experimentation to survive the eighteenth century as a compendium of virtually untraceable ideas.

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certainly a mason and therefore in touch with Chartres as grand master, although this was a function he performed without enthusiasm."

[73]. Braham, p. 79. For reasons already cited, Chevallier dismisses the rumour of Voltaire's membership in any lodge prior to his initiation in the Neuf Soeurs. Contemporaneous reports are somewhat ambiguous: receiving the delegation that went to recruit him, Voltaire appeared to have forgotten the formulas, feigning innocence of the Order. Voltaire's membership was a matter of pride to later Masons who propagated the story of a long affiliation. See Chevallier, pp. 273-4.

[74]. This is from a list broken down according to academic residencies in Rome. It includes, for comparison, the names of some architects who, on the strength of their talent, should have gone to Rome but did not, Brongniart and Ledoux among them. Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, Etienne-Louis Boullée, 1728-1799, de l'architecture classique à l'architecture Révolutionaire (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1969) p. 46.

[75]. Billiard de Belizard (or Claude Belisard) and Charles Alexandre Guillaumot (Charles Axel Guillaumot), "architect of the Gobelins," are insufficiently identified in Vidler to permit sound research from secondary sources. Pierre Poncet's contribution to Masonic architecture has been described in the previous chapter. Braham's interest in Freemasonry is cursory and he provides little support for his nomination of Victor Louis. The connection that he makes is an interesting one, in light of Ledoux's intersecting career in Besançon, but the matter would require considerable investigation.

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Within the first wave of Neoclassical architects, professional, social and familial connections abound. Relationships may have been strengthened by an invisible Masonic bond. Whether or not Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780), for example, was a Mason, his immediate circle of friends, colleagues and students included several important members. The engraver Charles-Nicolas Cochin, who was with Soufflot and Mme de Pompadour's brother, the future Marquis de Marigny, from 1749 to 1751, on their famous grand tour of Italian archaeological sites, is notable among them. Masonic undertones have been detected in the dense iconography of Cochin's frontispiece for the Encyclopédie, published between 1751-1765.[76] After their journey, Cochin shared the Parisian quarters provided Soufflot by Marigny who, in his official capacity as Directeur Général des Bâtiments, remained faithful and generous in his patronage to the companions he called "his eyes."[77] In 1755, Soufflot was named Contrôleur des Bâtiments du Roi au Department de Paris and commissioned to design the church of Ste-Geneviève where he contrived to combine the lightness of Gothic churches with the classicism of the Orders.[78]

Like many of his contemporaries, Soufflot was selective in his admiration for French Gothic architecture; he disapproved of its excessive decoration. What he wanted from the Medieval builder was the secret of his structure: in 1741, he had delivered before the Académie des Sciences in Lyons a paper on Gothic architecture dealing chiefly with proportion; some twenty years later, the correct division between fenestration and structural support continued to elude him. In 1762, he

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[76]. Chevallier, p. 269.

[77]. Braham, p. 44.

[78]. Robin Middleton and David Watkin, Neoclassical and 19th Century Architecture/1 (New York: Rizzoli, 1987) p. 20.

defended his project with empirical data collected by his student Jallier in the drawings and measurements of Notre-Dame in Dijon.[79] This research, together with the experimentation conducted with his friend, the engineer Jean-Rodolphe Perronet (1708-1794), ultimately did not prevent Ste-Geneviève from cracking. It was stabilized finally by Soufflot's pupil, Jean-Baptiste Rondelet (1734-1829) whose Traité théorique et pratique de l'art de bâtir (1802-1803) was a reinterpretation of Gothic building that placed theory at the service of construction and sounded a call to the authorities of perfection, solidity and economy. Like Soufflot, Rondelet was much interested in recent experiments in building with iron.[80] Perronet, on the other hand, set out his principals for bridges in the spirit of Soufflot's masonry at Ste-Geneviève, with arches equal in width and widely spread to minimize the disruption of currents, and with a strong horizontal line, reminiscent of Soufflot's straight lintels.[81]

Perronet exemplifies Freemasonry's accomodation of different personalities and personal relationships. Far from the mystics and social visionaries who loom large in the pre-Revolutionary Order, Perronet had a steady, open and pragmatic disposition. In addition to his engineering projects and teachings, Perronet is remembered for the application of his study on pin manufacturing to the organization of building bridges. His students at the École des Ponts et Chaussées were his "adopted children" who honoured him sixteen years before his death with a marble bust.[82] Perronet's lodge, Uranie, founded in 1787, included all the students and faculty of the school of civil and

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[79]. These were used by Pierre Patte to criticize Soufflot as he completed posthumously Jacques-François Blondel's Cours d'architecture (1777). See Middleton and Watkin, p. 22.

[80]. Middleton and Watkin, p. 28.

[81]. Braham, p. 68.

[82]. Antoine Picon, Architectes et Ingénieurs au Siècle des Lumières (Marseilles: Éditions Parenthèse, 1988) p. 306.

military engineers,[83] and had the character of an extended family.[84]

This was not the Masonic ambiance created by an older founder, J. B. de Puissieux, who in 1773 led the Worshipful Masters of Paris in their resistance to the Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg's reforms of the Order, and, in particular, to the duke's proposed enfranchisement of the provincial lodges. De Puissieux's long tenure as Worshipful Master ended in 1773; he had been a Mason since 1727,[85] placing him in his seventies during his last Masonic campaign.

Architecturally, de Puissieux is known for his treatise on geometry, Éléments et traité de géométrie (1765), a theme which strikes Vidler as a reflection of guild Masonic doctrine,[86] the French version of which de Puissieux effectively would have helped to shape. According to Vidler, de Puissieux was also chief architect of Ste-Geneviève under Soufflot.

Two others in the same circle belong, like Rondelet, to the third generation. They are Jean-François-Thérèse Chalgrin (1739-1811), who was related by marriage to Soufflot's close friend, the painter Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-1789); and Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757-after 1825), who was Soufflot's pupil.[87] A pupil of Servandoni and Boullée, Chalgrin moved independently toward the restrained classicism of the period, adapting well to the austerity of the Revolution, and supplely readapting to the more decorative aspects of the First Empire; as late as 1806, he was remaking himself in the severe military image of the Emperor for his final and successful version of the Austerlitz monument,

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[83]. Without elaborating, Vidler calls Perronet's a special case. See The Writing of the Walls, p. 93. The lack of exclusiveness and the youthfulness of the participants may be what he has in mind.

[84]. Picon, p. 306.

[85]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 93.

[86]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 93; Note 50, p. 209.

[87]. Braham, p. 79.

the Arc-de-Triomphe.[88] Lequeu, on the other hand, deeply talented as a draughtsman but lacking Chalgrin's background and influential connections, proved incapable of such flexibility and survived in angry obscurity.[89]

Outside the Soufflot circle, and between generations, was Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789), architect of the great circular Halle aux Blés in Paris (1763-67), the distinctive centrepiece of a new Parisian district and one of the first buildings to announce, in modern architectural terms, its function as a "temple of abundance."[90] Between 1775 and 1778, he built for the Duc de Choiseul an eccentric affectation of an Oriental model, the Pagode de Chanteloup, a layering of five polygons on top of two cylinders.[91] The seven levels are suggestive of the tower of Babel; they also allude to the seven steps of the Winding Stairs, a sacred theme of Symbolic Freemasonry which shifted in the eighteenth century from the First to the Second Degree.[92] Later, Le Camus de Mézières would synthesize his ideas on architectural character in his treatise, Le génie de l'architecture, ou l'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations (1780) which connected architecture to the senses by physiognomic analogy between building and nature;[93] by pleasing and

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[88]. Emil Kaufmann, Architecture in the Age of Reason (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1968) p. 169.

[89]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p 114-117.

[90]. Mark K. Deming, "Une capitale et des ports. Embellissement et planification urbaine à la fin de l'Ancien Régime," in Les Architectes de la Liberté 1789-1799, exh. cat., École nationale des Beaux-arts (Paris, 1989) pp. 52-54.

[91]. Kaufmann, p. 150.

[92]. Mackey, "Winding Stairs" and "Legend of the Winding Stairs," pp. 1107-1110 and "Seven," pp. 930-932. Seven is acknowledged as an important number in all the ancient systems and its adoption by Freemasonry began in the eighteenth-century as a borrowing from the Pythagorean idea of perfection in odd numbers. Some floor-cloths of the eighteenth century showed five steps; others showed seven.

[93]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 121.

elevating effects.[94]

The lodge to which Le Camus de Mézières and Chalgrin belonged was the Respectable Loge des Coeurs Simples de l'Étoile Polaire à l'Orient de Paris where, of the ninety members, ten were architects: Poncet, already mentioned for the interior design of the Grand-Orient, Billiard de Belizard (Claude Belisard?) and De Wailly among them.[95] Aside from its architectural contingent, des Coeurs Simples was made up of members of the middle-aristocracy, clergymen and merchants.

The initiation of Charles De Wailly (1730-1798) took place on December 11, 1774. He remained on the lists of the Loge des Coeurs Simples until 1778. He is also recorded as having been present at the inauguration of another lodge in Arras in 1786. As a documented Mason, De Wailly has merited close study, especially since the discovery by Monique Mosser of two drawings from 1774-75 showing his project for a Masonic temple; even so, Masonic influence is difficult to isolate from the other determinants of his work.[96]

Painter, theatre designer and architect, De Wailly represents the felicitous synthesis of many schools and disciplines. He studied the engravings of Legeay and Le Lorrain, his imagination stimulated by their follies, caprices and imaginary ruins. He was instructed in a more prescribed architecture by Jacques-François Blondel (1705-74). In 1752, he won the Prix de Rome and, in an unprecedented gesture, shared his scholarship with his friend Moreau-Desproux, which generosity was later repaid by Moreau-Desproux's disloyalty in competing against De Wailly for the Comédie-Française.

In happier days, their companion in Italy and De Wailly's future

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94. Middleton and Watkin, p. 26.

95. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 93.

96. Mosser and Rabreau, pp. 23-25.

collaborator was Marie-Joseph Peyre (1730-1785) whose appreciation of seventeenth-century Roman town-planning and exposure to archaelogical sites remained visible in his architectural combinations of Christian and pagan references.[97] De Wailly the draughtsman was struck by the work of the Italian engraver Giambattista Piranesi in whom he must have recognized the echoes of his older compatriot Legeay. De Wailly the designer followed Piranesi into the curiosities of Italian antiquarians. Like Soufflot, he had been attracted to the pioneering revivalism of Giovanni Niccolo Servandoni (1695-1766) who rewarded the younger man's interest by designating him his successor at St-Sulpice. De Wailly also assisted Servandoni with set design; one of his sketches shows a Doric palace crowned with pseudo-hieroglyphics. The Egyptian theme recurs in De Wailly. In 1764, framing with attributes a portrait of his patron, the Duc de Nivernais, he incorporated eagles, an olive branch, a caduceus, a lyre, and a sphynx whose presence prefigures by forty years tl[illegible]mental motifs of the First Empire.[98]

The fecundity of De Wailly's imagination, his expansiveness and the diversity of his background offer reasonable explanations for his work. Nevertheless, a number of motifs might also be seen as manifestations of his interest in the Order, though some predate his recorded initiation which, at the age of forty-four, need not, however, have been his first.[99]

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[97]. Braham, pp. 83-89.

[98]. Michel Gallet, "Sur Charles De Wailly (1730-1798)," in Charles de Wailly..., Mosser and Rabreau, eds., pp. 6-15. According to Nicholas Penny, Piranesi was first to domesticate Egyptian motifs, previously used mainly on tombs. His "Design for a Chimneypiece in the Egyptian manner" appeared in Diverse maniere (1769), a compendium of decorative variations on the antique. See Nicholas Penny, Piranesi (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1988) pp. 88-89.

[99]. Masonic patrons of De Wailly included the Marquis d'Argenson. (See Mosser and Rabreau, p. 25.) De Wailly worked for various members of the family, starting in the 1760s. It is possible that patron and architect were part of a lodge that formed before Montmorency-Luxembourg's rationalization of the Order.

His interest in the Temple of Jerusalem had been proven in his thirties by a fanciful recreation of the restored temple (1766). [Illustration 3] Despite the title, there is less fidelity to the Bible in this rendering than a previsualization of the Modern ease of arcades and covered passageways. The design has been called a manifesto for his later career in urban-planning.[100]

Elementary Masonic symbols are embedded in his series of projects for the Comédie-Française, an extended commission that he shared with Peyre, beginning in 1767. What Braham calls "the oddest feature of the interior" is "a pair of free-standing columns within the proscenium"[101], like the Masonic pillars of the porch. Though not unique architecturally, they were an innovation in theatre design, vehemently defended for their usefulness by the architects and ultimately cut from the project.[102] De Wailly reintroduced his motif in his allegorical reception piece for the Académie de Peinture, a "Roman" view of the vestibule of the Comédie-Française (1771). At the bottom right corner, a kneeling architect uses an immense compass to trace a circle on the floor: either a paving design or the plan of an invisible column.[103]

Mosser, Rabreau and Gallet have noted De Wailly's predilection for circles that appear alone or doubled in geometric constructions in the plans of chapels, chateaux, follies, and rhythmic bays.[104] Circular plans were not uncommon in the eighteenth-century; De Wailly and his students made use of them regularly, as did others with or without known Masonic affiliation, in everything from pigeonhouses to mausoleums. The

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[100]. Mosser and Rabreau, p. 64.

[101]. Braham, p. 101.

[102]. Braham, p. 101.

[103]. Mosser and Rabreau, p. 38.

[104]. Gallet's example is Le Reposoir de la Fête-Dieu at Versailles. See "Sur Charles de Wailly (1730 - 1798)," p. 12.

circular plan created an effect of perfect unity[105] and formed in its self-sufficiency an area of complete seclusion, "the creation of a sacred precinct."[106] Similarly, the choreographed circumambulation of the altar of the Masonic temple was the initiate's tour of a perfect and enclosed universe.

In the same vein, Mosser and Rabreau have observed De Wailly's passion for stairways, "un morceau en soi, comme un chef-d'oeuvre de compagnonnage,"[107] As winding stairs, they might well have been an emblem of the Brotherhood. De Wailly built such an imposing stairway within a fifty-foot high hollow column, part of the reconstruction of the Château des Ormes for d'Argenson (1769-1778). Its decorative motifs included two interlaced serpents; the double stairway was crowned by a pair of sphynxes.

Like the mythic motifs, the paired columns also persisted, reappearing in De Wailly's maquette for the curtain of the Comédie-Française, a large drawing entitled, L'Intérieur du Temple de Jerusalem avec la dernière scène d'Athalie (1785), which bears a striking resemblance to his first interior of a Masonic temple, the view toward the Orient (1774). [Illustrations 4 & 5] That drawing and its pendant, the view toward the Occident (1775) are not considered works of the imagination but detailed projects for a specific site, the Hôtel de Bullion on the rue du Coq-Héron which was renovated by the Mère-Loge du Rite Écossais.[108]

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[105]. Kaufmann, on Colonna's Temple of Venus, p. 90.

[106]. Kaufmann, on the circular colonnades of Marie-Joseph Peyre's project for a cathedral (Pl. II, Oeuvres d'architecture, 2nd ed.; Paris, 1795) p. 143.

[107]. Mosser and Rabreau, p. 38.

[108]. An inventory of De Wailly's collection included fifteen paintings by Vouet removed from the ceilings of the Hôtel de Bullion. The supposition is that De Wailly acquired the works during the renovations. See Mosser and Rabreau, p. 25.

In addition to his active architectural practice, De Wailly was also a teacher and among his students were Louis-François Petit-Radel (1740-1818) and Bernard Poyet (1742-1824), both architects whose projects reflect his dramatic imprint on the architecture of modernization and accelerated political change.

In the renderings of Petit-Radel, produced in the late 1760s after his sojourn in Rome, the legacy of Piranesi appears in a fantastic, richly atmospheric and spacious interior of a temple.[109] Petit-Radel's respect for history did not extend to Gothic architecture; he is said to have devised a plan to destroy a Gothic church by fire in less than five minutes and his renovations of the Parisian church of St-Médard included the disguise of its Gothic columns by fluted cladding and the addition of primitive capitals.[110] According to Robert Rosenblum, Petit-Radel's architectural revival of the antique is unsentimental and Modern. His baseless Doric column is the purveyor "of a lucid and elementary geometric order," not an emulation of Piranesi's "stirring spectacle of transience and decay."[111]

In the 1780s, Poyet, like Victor Louis, worked for Grand-Master, the Duc de Chartres, adding to his houses in Paris and building him great stables near the Louvre;[112] he participated in the Ancien Régime's awakening public consciousness, designing a circular hospital for the isolation of disease on an island in the Seine. In 1798 (Year VI of the Revolutionary calendar), he conceived of a colossal column to be erected near the Pont-Neuf as a monument to French military victory;[113] in 1808,

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[109]. Pierre Provoyeur and Catherine Provoyeur, Le Temple, exh. cat., Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1982, pp. 190-191.

[110]. Robert Rosenblum, Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) pp. 111-112.

[111]. Rosenblum, p. 113.

[112]. Braham, p. 241.

[113]. Kaufmann, p. 159.

he suffered the derision of Brongniart for appending a classical pediment to the Chambre des Deputés.[114]

Poyet shared his teacher's interest in the cylindrical form but his enormous Nouvel Hôtel-Dieu (1785) was defensible on practical terms. With wards radiating around a central chapel, Poyet's plan reversed the direction of surveillance built into Samuel Bentham's Panopticon by offering the hospital's 5,000 bed ridden patients visual access to the Mass;[115] economy might also have been argued, based on Durand's Précis des leçons d'architecture, données à l'École polytechnique (1802), which criticized Ste-Geneviève, offering a "vaste and magnificent" circular alternative which would have been cheaper to build.[116]

Economic arguments were typical of an age in which the country was teetering on insolvency and foreign princes were building ostentatious town houses. In the eighties, Pierre Rousseau (1751-1810) was the young architect of a notorious project for Prince Frederick of Salm-Kyrberg, a domestic amalgam of palace, hospital and church, that eventually became the Légion d'Honneur.[117] Economy was certainly argued on another occasion, in Poyet's slanderous exchange of pamphlets with his predecessor in municipal service, a fellow-Mason and estranged friend of his teacher, Pierre-Louis Moreau-Desproux (1737-1793).[118]

The former Maitre des Bâtiments de la Ville de Paris, Moreau-Desproux had enjoyed a variety of opportunities for public and private works, as

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[114]. Kaufmann, p. 170.

[115]. Helen Rosenau, "Boullée and Ledoux as Town-Planners A Re-Assessment," in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol. 63, 1964, p. 187.

[116]. Werner Oeschlin, "Pyramide et Sphére. Notes sur l'architecture Révolutionaire du XVIIIe siècle et ses sources italiennes," in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol. 77, 1971, p. 204.

[117]. Braham, pp. 229-230.

[118]. Braham, p. 107.

well as for architectonic ephemera, that he produced at the pleasure of the court. In 1782, he designed a temporary pavilion for the festival honouring the birth of the Dauphin, a Temple of Hymen. [Illustration 6] As Braham has pointed out, the design echoes one of Jean-Joseph Le Lorrain's "machina" for fireworks produced for the Roman Festa della Chinea of 1747. [Illustration 7] This is true of the circular temple but, while Le Lorrain had characterized his mausoleum with statues, smoking sacrificial altars and four obelisks, Moreau-Desproux used two colossal free-standing columns to mark the ceremonial entrance[119] and possibly to symbolize the future king's initiatory journey.

Le Lorrain's Chinea decorations of 1746 and 1747 had been expressed in a modern Neoclassical language, formed in Rome by Legeay and Piranesi[120] and fractured into imagerial dialects by their students and followers. Significance aside, the temporary ceremonial function of Moreau-Desproux's monument made it an appropriate hommage to Legeay who was of a generation that adhered to the code of "convenance." Exposed in Paris to the work of his students, Legeay once bemoaned the proliferation of columns which he saw as the misapplication of his designs for decorations and fireworks to monuments of more lasting value.[121] The antiquarian movement was by then unstoppable. Formally, figuratively, the prototypes of Egypt, Greece and Rome had been mobilized.

Just as the symbols of the Greeks and Romans had been divested of their original sacred meaning and applied as decorative or functional elements to the Christian temples like Ste-Geneviève, so could the same process strip Christian temples of their Christianity and remake them in the image of the Revolution as a national monument, such as became the

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[119]. Braham, p. 105

[120]. John Harris, "Le Geay, Piranesi and International Neo-Classicism in Rome 1740-1750," in Essays in the History of Architecture presented to Rudolf Wittkower, D. Fraser, W. Hibbard and M.J. Lewine, eds. (London and New York: Phaidon, 1969) p. 195.

[121]. Braham, p. 54.

Panthéon. A prerequesite to this metamorphosis was the blurring of authorities. Wiping the collective memory stripped classical monuments of their former associations giving the new iconographers ancient and powerful symbolic husks. The same phenomenon was occurring in the evolving interpretation of Ramsay's Masonic history of civilization. Cultural and historical reworkings went on inside and outside the lodge.

One year after the Revolution, Jacques Cellérier (1742-1814) rendered onto the French people a religious architecture of Augustan imperialism when he erected on the Champs de Mars an oblong circus[122] and an eighty-foot triumphal arch for the Festival of the Federation. [Illustration 8] Cellérier did not design the centrepiece of the arena, a cylindrical altar rising from a pyramid and decorated with symbols, but he participated with Joseph Jacques Ramée and Jacques-Louis David in the setting of an all-day event that included a celebration of the Mass by Talleyrand and the celebrated oath of Lafayette. Cellérier's triple arch is the monumental backdrop to historic moments of religious pageantry and patriotic theatre.[123] This from an architect banned from the Academy for speculation, the conductor of a fashionable Parisian practise, the friend and biographer of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.[124]

Symbols and functions collided in the conflation of pleasure garden and burial ground designed for the Cemetery of Père Lachaise by Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart (1739-1813). The individual elements of Brongniart's design are less surprising than their orchestration in a series of transformative meetings in nature. His mausoleums, obelisks and central pyramid are assembled from ancient funereal precedents hypothesized from ecphrasis, derived from Italian renderings or studied first-hand in Rome, and made available to those like Brongniart who

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[122]. Kaufmann, p. 183.

[123]. Anita Brookner, Jacques-Louis David (London: Chatto & Windus, Ltd., 1980) p. 104. See also Simon Schama, Citizens, A Chronicle of the French Revolution (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) pp. 504-513.

[124]. Braham, p. 238.

never went there, in the engravings and emulative designs of French architects like Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot, Jérôme-Charles Bellicard, Jean-Charles Delafosse, Jean-François de Neufforge, Etienne-Eloy de la Barre, Etienne-Louis Boullée and Pierre Fontaine.[125] At Père Lachaise, the progress that Brongniart proposed was ritualistic in character, not unlike the plotting of the garden that he had earlier conceived for the Marquis de Montesquiou at Maupertuis,[126] his patron and brother in the Loge Saint-Jean Écosse du Contrat Social.

On the same principal but perhaps more evocative still of the passage of initiation were Brongniart's designs for artificial mountains to be erected in cathedrals for the staging of great Revolutionary pageants to Liberty. In 1793, many Catholic churches were transformed suddenly into Temples to Reason. The archetype was a symbolic mountain, erected in the choir and crowned by a temple dedicated to philosophy. There Liberty was installed on a grassy mound to receive the hommage of spectators.

Brongniart designed such an installation for the Cathédrale St-André in Bordeaux. [Illustration 9] The gradation rose from the transept to the entrance, reversing the traditional orientation of the Christian church. The processional climb was set to follow a series of circular platforms along alleys and through grottoes to gather finally around Liberty, enthroned on the summit. Judged too cumbersome, that project was abandoned but Brongniart apparently executed a similar plan for the church of Notre-Dame of Bordeaux.[127]

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[125]. Richard A. Etlin, The Architecture of Death. The Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The MIT Press, 1984) pp. 101-159.

[126]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 100.

[127]. François-Georges Pariset, "L'architecte Brongniart, ses activités à Bordeaux et à Réole (1793-1795)," in Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Bordeaux Tome LXII, 1957-1962 (1965), pp. 20-26. See also, Frédéric Morvan, "Architecture et urbanisme en province," in Les Architects de la Liberté 1789 - 1799, pp. 220-225 (Plate 164).

By the end of the century, the minds and institutions of the French people were ready for such ideological substitutions for the Faith. The architectural theoretician Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) recognized the onset of Christian spirituality's eclipse as he recollected favourably the mid-century design for the Church of St-Sauveur: "M. Chalgrin wished to simplify the system of Christian churches and lead them architecturally to a unity of plan and articulation, and to the form of antique temples."[128]

From 1782 to 1786, Quatremère de Quincy was a recorded member of the lodge Thalie. He exhibited, according to Vidler, "all the characteristics of one who was influenced by his Masonic affiliations: his emphasis on idealist typology and his academic interest in Egyptian architecture well before Napoleon's expedition to Egypt easily coincided with what may be regarded as legitimate Masonic concerns."[129] His prize essay for the Académie des Inscriptions of 1785 promoted the virtues of Greek architecture over Egyptian; it included a description of Thebes and Karnak, "according to his understanding of the mysteries,"[130] that is, functionally, by the adjacencies and sight lines of a progressively disclosed inner temple.

Interest in Egypt was hardly the preserve of Freemasonry and cool academic interest was never Egypt's Masonic reception. Professionally, Quatremère de Quincy was participating in an already active area of inquiry: the pyramid, as a motif in French architecture, predated his initiation by over half-a-century; it had penetrated European consciousness through exposure to Roman monuments like the Pyramid of Cestius or the Meta Romuli, as well as the reconstructions of Montano and Bartoli; it was the object of research by Kircher and de Spon, and

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128. Braham, p. 133.

129. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, pp. 93-94.

130. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 98.

the subject of writing by Pliny, Vitruvius and later travellers; it was disseminated in the engravings of Fischer von Erlach and others already mentioned, "bien avant la fameuse expédition napoléonienne de 1798."[131] It was projected by one architect on a symbol of French national pride when he proposed the encasing of the Panthéon, the old Ste-Geneviève, in a pyramid.[132]

By 1788, Quatremère de Quincy was exhibiting characteristics of one who had repudiated Freemasonry when he wrote the article, "Allégorie," for his Encyclopédie méthodique. He chastised architectural interpreters for reading into forms meanings not intended: he complained that a pediment could no longer merely represent a roof, but through its necessary geometric form, had become a mysterious triangle and the emblem of the divinity.[133]

Nevertheless, Quatremère de Quincy's pronouncements on architectural and cultural theory continued to exhibit one Masonic trait: the conceit of internationalism that gripped both Freemasonry and Neoclassicism in the late-eighteenth century. He declared that the arts and sciences had formed Europe into a republic, with member-nations that, "liés entre eux par l'amour et la recherche du beau et du vrai qui sont leur pacte social, tendent beaucoup moins à isoler de leurs patries respectives, qu'à en rapprocher les intérêts, sous le point de vue si précieux d'une fraternité universelle."[134]

This might have been the credo of Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer (1756-1846) whose Maison d'un Cosmopolite, a spherical structure decorated on

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131. Oechslin, p. 217.

132. Braham, p. 82.

133. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 146.

134. Oechslin, pp. 227-228.

the interior with stars and the zodiac,[135] was an ideal monument to scientific speculation and an emulation of Etienne-Louis Boullée's project for a cenotaph for Sir Isaac Newton (1784). Boullée's prototype was adopted by Jean-Jacques Lequeu for his Temple de la Terre (1790),[136] though Lequeu, as always, sought the broadest, most declamatory visual equivalents for his esoteric themes.

Allusions to Freemasonry are everywhere in Lequeu's work; they are irrefutably tied to him personally in a self-portrait of 1786 which includes an imaginary coat of arms assembled from a visual pun on his name (a quail's tail), a Masonic column and a plumb line.[137] The self-portrait was an ongoing project of Lequeu. It has been linked by Vidler to theories of a physiognomic architecture - the ultimate expression of function through the imposition on a building facade of human character - explored by Le Camus de Mézières, Quatremère de Quincy and Ledoux.[138]

This widespread architectural interest is a more persuasive explanation for Lequeu's activities than Vidler's other theory which is a psychological reading of Lequeu, modelled after the critic Ernst Kris's psychological reading of Messerschmidt, the late-eighteenth-century sculptor. Vidler parallels Lequeu's and Messerschmidt's neurotic symptoms; he focusses on Lequeu's narcissism as well as on his preoccupations with names and smells, and with purification by air, water, fire and (Vidler adds in brackets) soap.[139] The physiognomic self-portraits are grouped together with another set of drawings that are put forward as evidence of a voyeuristic Lequeu's attempts to extend into architectural character not just the face but the physiognomy of

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[135]. Rosenau, pp. 186-187.

[136]. Kaufmann, p. 185.

[137]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, pp. 118-119.

[138]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 121.

[139]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 115.

the entire body: his own and a female body, real or imagined, that he sometimes combined in a hermaphroditic self-portrait.[140]

Deprived of the example of Messerschmidt, Vidler might have gravitated toward a simpler explanation for Lequeu's interests that took into account his involvement in Freemasonry. The names, the smells, the purifying elements and the hermaphrodite, as an ultimate symbol of transmutation, all belong to the practice of alchemy which in the latter half of the eighteenth century was adopted by Freemasonry as part of its rituals and arcana. That Lequeu should have explored these ideas in his drawings is unsurprising, given the rest of his Masonic oeuvre: a projection or back-forming of a Masonic architecture on the initiation by fire, air and water described by Abbé Terrasson in Sethos (1733);[141] a Solomonic cowshed, modelled on a massive bullish cow, ceremonially draped, burdened by a vessel and turned toward the South; and a great variety of temples, classical, spherical, and cylindrical, including one purportedly built for Masonic meetings, the porticoed Greek temple called the Temple of Silence.[142]

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[140]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, pp. 119-121.

[141]. Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 99.

[142]. Braham, p. 232; Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, p. 100.

Chapter III. Manifestations of Freemasonry in the Architecture of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Masonic Motifs, Patterns and Traits in Projects Predating the Propylaea; the Saline de Chaux (1773 - 1778) and the Ideal City of Chaux (1780 - 1804); Evidence of Ledoux's Connection to the Order

In the eighteenth century, Freemasonry left its architectural mark through three forms of expression: motif, pattern and trait. Examples can be identified with some confidence in the work of known Freemasons like Charles De Wailly who appears to have animated his work with Solomonic elements and Egyptian symbols. Other architects as well seemed to adapt the meaningful patterns of Masonic ritual to profane public commissions. Projects such as Brongniart's plotted walks at Père Lachaise and Cellérier's oblong circus for the Festival of the Federation look and feel precast in the ceremonial. Elsewhere, analogy blends with utility to touch certain works with aspects of a Masonic character: Camus le Mézières's Pagode de Chanteloup exhibits Masonic traits in its inspirational upward spiral. Such visual references and symbolic devices can be understood within the closed system of Masonic ideas but the intended effect of their broader public use remains unclear. The problem is exacerbated when there is no sure source of Masonic knowledge to explain the presence of the Order's imagery in an architect's work. This is the case of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

Masonic motifs have been recognised in Ledoux's decorative schemes including, at the most basic level, attributes and properties of Brothernood, and at a more esoteric level, cultural references to the widespread sources of the rite. In summarizing Ledoux, Vidler puts special emphasis on a "Freemasonic repertoire of 'Egyptian' motifs, the all-seeing eyes, fasces, tables of the law, double columns."[143] It can also be argued that Ledoux draws regularly on the complementary vocabularies of Medieval masonry, heraldry and Solomonic origins. These

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[143]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 387.

appear in his private work for Masonic patrons and are vulgarized in his public commissions.

We know, however, that Masonic motifs are changeable, complex and sometimes misleading. Frustrating firm interpretation, Ledoux's "Freemasonic repertoire" partakes in the curious and encyclopedic mentality of his day. Only in light of the context, function and character of his work, can Ledoux's use of symbols amount to anything. Like any symbolic system, Masonic signs and symbols accrue significance through concentration, adjacency and passages of cumulative revelation. What Vidler has aptly described as an "exploitation of movement, literal and figural, marked by routes emblematically defined,"[144] is an essential feature of Ledoux's imagerial designs. The plans and distributions of his rooms evince ceremonial preparedness, although the shape and detail of the impending ceremony might remain unclear. As a conveyor of doctrine, the Masonic ritual must be teachable and repeatable, but as a secret, it is protected by dense and contradictory description. Narrative accounts and visual replicas mount dizzying mental images of movement which is - singularly, combinatively, sequentially or simultaneously - linear, triangular, vertical and circular in pattern.

Then as now, what the uninitiated knew of the Masonic rite was its dressed and vacated stage, schematically depicted in drawings and embroideries. Ledoux's adoption of ritually charged design says everything and nothing about Freemasonry, for programmatic movement imposed on a non-theatrical architectural space was, like antiquity, well established outside the Order: at the height of Baroque absolutism, the Sun King had laid out his garden to rechoreograph the movement of the sun; in the fever of the Revolution, political pageantry would ape the sacraments. Eighteenth-century Freemasonry carved out its rituals somewhere in between and their imprint appears on plans drawn by Ledoux whether as imitations of disclosures or as his own shielding abstractions.

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[144]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. xv.

Disputatious as its implementation might have been, there was nothing so confusing in the notion of architectural character. On the contrary, the idea of character was inseparable from purity and simplicity of expression aimed at an overall effect. Character flowed from the perfect legibility of the building, from the faithful translation of its purpose and origin into sound and appropriate form. According to the influential theorist and teacher, Jacques-François Blondel (1705-1774), principles of proportion could be calculated rationally, even scientifically, to create effects or to stimulate sensations in the viewer. By such subtle nuances, the designer could leaven the symmetry, good taste and sobriety of classicism's objective beauty. A student of Blondel, Ledoux, like Le Camus de Mézières, formed his own theory of characterization, neither physiognomic nor metaphorical, but abstract, as a cumulative effect of mass and geometric form. A more literal application of this theory encouraged the extreme outspokeness of Ledoux's 'architecture parlante.'[145] Elsewhere in Ledoux's work, character should not be overlooked even though it might not rise to the same polemical pitch where the motivating force or influence is a circumspect Freemasonry.

According to records, Ledoux's access to Masonic ideas could not have been through membership in the Parisian Grand-Orient of 1773 to 1789. Prior connections through friendship, patronage and professional networks cannot be discounted but are not, on the evidence, conclusive. The eyewitness account of Ledoux on a hallucinatory Masonic outing has been dismissed in some quarters for the unreliability of the witness.[146]

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[145]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 206-208.

[146]. As discussed later in this chapter, both Braham and Vidler accept the account of William Beckford's adventure with Ledoux as evidence of his membership in some kind of secret society, "crypto-masonic" or Masonic. Beckford's account "on its own" does not convince Helen Rosenau of Ledoux's adherence to "a secret sect such as the Rosicrucians." See Helen Rosenau, "Ledoux (1736-1806) An Essay in Historiography," in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol. 101, mai-juin 1983, p. 177.

What cannot be ignored, however, is the accumulation in Ledoux's work of motifs, patterns and traits that allude to Freemasonry. Scholars have detected all three in Ledoux's industrial projects: the Saline de Chaux (1773 - 1778), a factory complex commissioned and built in the Franche-Comté by the Crown and the Farmers-General, and the Ideal City of Chaux (1780 - 1804), a speculative variation on the modern corporate city. They are equally present, which is to say, they are present to the same varying degrees, in his commissioned work for Masonic patrons and in his public projects, including his last monument which was the publication of his architectural oeuvre.

Masonic Motifs

One of Ledoux's earliest commissions for a family with Masonic connections was the renovation of the Hôtel d'Uzès (1768). Ledoux's first public success, the thematic interior of the Café Militaire (1762) might have been his introduction to the Duc d'Uzès whose military exploits were to be celebrated in the decoration of his home. Ledoux struck the proper note with a triumphal gateway that included two free-standing columns hung with military trophies and a reclining Minerva over the door. [Illustration 10] The inspiration for the design was credited to Marie-Joseph Peyre[147] but its seamless integration with the interior links the project overall to the heraldic theme of Ledoux's military café, reinforcing the Masonic myth of chivalric origins.

The 'salon de compagnie' or second salon of the Hôtel d'Uzès was decorated with door panels featuring shields with animals of the four continents, along with the appropriate arms (a variety of arrows with the American alligator, for example), precious metals and exotic foods designating Asia, Africa and America, and emblems of the arts, including the compass, to denote the intellectual preeminence of Europe. Traditional in form and iconography, these elements would not have seemed unusual. Retrospectively, in light of the high Masonic office

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[147]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 28.

held in the late 1780s by the duke's son, Vidler has interpreted the global theme as an allegory of world unity, then present in some Masonic lodges. His observation is reinforced by his recognition of "the four Masonic virtues: Wisdom, Strength, Justice and Truth."[148]

What struck Ledoux's contemporaries, however, were his designs for the vertical panels between the doors: weapons, lyres, caducei and shields, all arranged in the branches of laurel trees which, seemingly rooted in the floor, extend the height of the room. [Illustration 11] Two sources have since been suggested for this imagery: one is heraldic tradition which had influenced an earlier scheme by British architect Robert Adam; the other is the architectural writing of Abbé Laugier who had traced the column back to its natural beginnings and argued for the revival of the Colossal Order.[149] Ledoux used massive columns on the exterior of the mansion, to the disgust of Blondel who ridiculed his former student's misuse of the Colossal Order intended to dignify important buildings like churches.[150] Vidler sets Ledoux's project outside this theoretical debate, explaining the interior decoration otherwise, as a theatrical setting, "a highly wrought allegory of a forest grove."[151]

Another example of such arboreal decoration can be found in the

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[148]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 33. These are not the Cardinal Virtues, according to Mackey who names "temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice," as virtues inculcated during initiation to the First Degree. The Cardinal Points, linked to the sacred number four - the cross, the four winds, and the four points on the compass - are assigned "mystical meaning: the East represents Wisdom; the West, Strength; the South, Beauty; and the North, Darkness." See Mackey, "Cardinal Points" and "Cardinal Virtues," pp. 179-180.

[149]. Michel Gallet, "La jeunesse de Ledoux," in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol 75, 1970, pp. 75-84.

[150]. Vidler cites Jacques-François Blondel and Jean-François de Bastide, Les amours rivaux ou l'homme du monde éclairé par les arts, 2 vols (Amsterdam and Paris, 1774) 1:255ff. See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 29-32.

[151]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 32-33.

sanctuary of an ideal temple which is described in The First Book of the Kings and elaborated in Ezekiel's vision from The Prophets.

> From the door to the inner part of the Temple, and right round the whole wall of the inner room, outside and inside, were carved cherubs and palm trees, palm trees and cherubs alternating; each cherub had two faces - the face of a man turned towards the palm tree on one side and the face of a lion towards the palm tree the other side, all round the Temple. The cherubs and palm trees were carved from floor to above the entrance, as also on the wall of the hall.[152]

The Hôtel d'Uzès is an early example of Ledoux's architectural combinations of heraldic and Masonic iconography. Whether he intended by the exterior columns a sly expression of the occasional temple within must remain an open question. What shows clearly, however, is the emergence of a Solomonic image that will be employed elsewhere in tandem with heraldic themes.

Ledoux and De Wailly were not the first architects to fasten on this image. The Church of St Charles Borromeo (Karlskirche) in Vienna (1716-1737) by Fischer von Erlach, published in 1721 in his Outline for a History of Architecture, combines in one building much of the meaning that is entrained by the Roman columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, the Hagia Sofia, the columns of Hercules and the Temple of Jerusalem.[153] In 1775, Ledoux's triumphal arch, designed for the Landgrave Frederick of Hesse-Cassel, echoed Fischer's multiple quotation.

Ledoux's facility with the language of Symbolic Freemasonry is again exemplified by the decoration of a Palladian mansion in which he combined figuratively the military history of the Montmorency-Luxembourg

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[152]. Ezekiel 41: 17-21, The Jerusalem Bible.

[153]. Joseph Rykwert, The First Moderns (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1987) pp. 73-74.

with the family's established Masonic connections. Built for the Prince de Montmorency between 1769 and 1771 (before, it will be remembered, his relative's rationalization of the Order provided for permanent lodges), the Hôtel de Montmorency contained an overt display of Masonic emblems: compasses, squares, globes and caducei.[154] To oversee the decoration of Montmorency-Luxembourg's home and temporary lodge, Ledoux had either to know the meaning of or to be given without explanation certain symbols to work into the iconographic scheme. Here again, the elements were fundamental and conservative, of the dominant Order, the Order of the nobleman and the knight.

This apparently was the same strain of Freemasonry that Ledoux encountered in the Franche-Comté where, in 1778, he was commissioned to design a hunting lodge for the Prince de Bauffremont. In the Medieval context of this restoration project, Ledoux privileged heraldry over the hunt, covering the exterior walls of the pavilions with armorial motifs. This approach, speculates Vidler, may have been driven by a regional type of Freemasonry enjoyed under the patronage of a seigneur by aristocrats and soldiers in associations of arquebusiers.[155]

Despite the obvious differences in purpose and attitude, there are basic similarities between the chivalric lodge and the more arcane expression of Freemasonry that coexisted with it in the regions. Mysticism was particularly important at Metz where the Templar myth of Masonic origins had some of its strongest proponents and charismatic leaders.[156] In 1771, Ledoux was appointed Commissaire des Salines for Franche-Comté, Lorraine, and the bishoprics of Verdun, Metz and Toul in Lorraine.[157] This was the beginning of an intensely active period of his practice

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[154]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 38.

[155]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 73.

[156]. Chevallier, pp. 231-251.

[157]. His appointment placed him under Jean-Rodolphe Perronet. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 75.

during which he changed the balance of his commissions from private to public with projects as varied as the Saline de Chaux, the Théatre de Besançon, the Palais de Justice at Aix-en-Provence and the Barrières of Paris. In the context of public accountability, Masonic motifs can less easily be attributed to the private desires of a commissioner.

A completely independent work, Ledoux's engraving of the all-seeing eye is undoubtedly his most easily recognized Masonic image. [Illustration 12] A single dominant eye is projected on the stage of the Théatre de Besançon. Beams of light shine out of and back into the retina, suggesting a reciprocal relation between the actor or director and his audience.[158] According to Vidler, Ledoux's concurrent projects for the theatre and the Saline were also inextricably linked: Vidler's analysis of the layout of the Saline and the surveillance function of the Director's Building is supported by comparisons with Ledoux's theatre.[159] The engraving of the eye is nevertheless considered by Vidler to be a "late invention... possibly inspired by both Freemasonic and Revolutionary sources."[160] These being contiguous phenomena, Vidler's implication is unclear. The motif, however, in either application, is not. In Egyptian iconography, the all-seeing eye was the sign of Osiris. The eye of God was recast by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs as a symbol of the watchful, omnipresent deity and embraced by Freemasonry as a symbol of the Supreme Being.[161] The theme of seeing, or

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[158]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 184.

[159]. According to Vidler, "Ledoux made it clear that he regarded the one as the microcosm of the other. The plans of Besançon were the only built designs included in the first volume of L'architecture that did not concern the saline directly, thus emphasizing the intimate link, not only regional but also theoretical and architectural, between the two." Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 162. Vidler here overlooks the inclusion in the first volume of two fragments of the Propylaea (Plates 77 and 93), variations on designs that were realized during Ledoux's lifetime.

[160]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 387-389.

[161]. Mackey goes so far as to say that the hatchet that is sometimes the attribute of Osiris is, in fact, a representation of a square. See Mackey, "All-Seeing Eye," pp. 52-53.

speculation, leads directly to a number of figurative and functional architectural elements favoured by Ledoux: the watchtower, the oculus and the lantern; fenestrated attic storeys and belvederes.

Masonic Patterns

The prescribed pattern of the lodge is a double square: two perfect forms creating a rectangular space in which triangles, circles and lines are corporally traced in patterns of fixed position and movement. In the universe that is the lodge, on a triangular path from the Second Warden to the First then to the Worshipful Master, the initiate visits the three positions of the sun. Similarly, the circumambulation of the initiate around the sacred altar and the Brothers standing in two parallel lines bodily form the "point within the circle," a symbol of Egyptian derivation for the omnipotence of the Supreme Being and the parallel attributes of Power and Wisdom.[162] Vidler's Masonic reading of Ledoux draws from his work even more variations in plan: the circle of fraternity, the upward spiral of knowledge, the semi-circle of watchfulness, the linear progress of initiation and the cube of completeness.

Ledoux was an advocate of simple geometry. Likewise, a Freemason could have declared as Ledoux did: "All the forms that one describes with a single stroke of the compass are allowed by taste. The circle, the square, these are the alphabetic letters that authors employ in the texture of their best works."[163] In previous centuries, the square in plan had been the powerful secret of the Medieval mason. Its arcane geometry ensured the stability of the Gothic pile and protected the

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[162]. Mackey, "Point Within The Circle," pp. 787-788.

[163]. Vidler's translation of an extract from Ledoux's note to Plate 61, a front elevation of the Director's Building, in L'architecture..., p. 135. See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 149.

interests of the itinerant craftsman.[164] Accordingly, in Speculative Freemasonry, the rough stone, as quarried, became the emblem of the profane, while the hewn stone, cubical and fitted for its place in the structure of the temple, was an emblem of the Apprentice's Degree.

Emil Kaufmann has catalogued the geometric building blocks of Ledoux's vocabulary.[165] The mansion for the President of the Parliament of Metz, Jean-Hyacinthe Hocquart, was "a cube erected on a nine-partite square...The center was occupied by the very high circular dining room."[166] Vidler observes that most of Ledoux's designs are disciplined in the classical manner of Palladio. Ledoux's rigorously limited repertoire of form includes the nine-square Palladian grid, the rotunda and the basilica; "the centralized Villa Rotonda plan was transformed in every possible way."[167] The numbers three, nine, twenty-seven and eighty-one are sacred numbers in Freemasonry. The earliest Masonic symbolism attributed talismanic powers to the Talmudic nine-section Square of Saturn; these were extended in modern times to variations on the Magic Square taken up by mathematicians and inventors.[168]

Mindful of Ledoux's mystical tendencies, Vidler has nevertheless emphasized the more functional socializing tendencies of his geometric plans. There are, however, no real examples of social levelling. The semi-circular plan of the Théatre de Besançon reinforced divisions between social classes by continuing the practice of assigning seats according to rank: Ledoux's revolutionary gesture was to change the

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164. Paul Frankl "The Secret of the Mediaeval Masons," with Erwin Panofsky, "An Explanation of Stornaloco's Formula," in Art Bulletin, Vol. 27, March 1945, pp. 46-65.

165. Emil Kaufmann, 'The Rule of Geometry', in "Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 42, Part 3, Philadelphia, 1952, pp. 483-486.

166. Kaufmann, p. 484.

167. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 145.

168. Mackey, "Magic Squares," pp. 610-612.

benefits of privilege by assuming that the best people wanted the best view of the stage.

The same social message was delivered using the vertical axis. Within the block-like exterior of the Palais de Justice (1783 - 1787), a "continuous upward movement from the front to the rear of the building"[169] confirmed the hierarchy of the judicial community; the stratification of the pile was its distribution of halls, stairways and chapels. On the outside, the pyramidal roof was topped by a lantern; within, one of three centralized sources of light directed the gaze upward to the domed rotunda.[170] From the stern masculinity of the Doric portico to the colossal free-standing Corinthian columns of the interior, the Palais de Justice was an eccentric display of classical elements, announcing an unmistakeable message of centralized and immutable authority.

Masonic Traits

Sufficient evidence has been provided of the multiplicity of the Order in the formative years predating the French Revolution. The same level of diversity appears in the architectural production of Ledoux where certain Masonic threads have been noted by Vidler, Braham and Mosser Most frequently mentioned is the phenomenon of sociability. This is the keystone of Vidler's reconstruction of Ledoux as a Freemason. From its natural environment within the walls of an arquebusier lodge, sociability comes to dominate Vidler's view of Ledoux's industrial cities.

Another trait is the seizure and disposition of dramatic visual effect. Vidler, Braham and Mosser have discussed Ledoux's rhetorical and theatrical flourishes: Vidler builds on these points, with biographical

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169. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 197.

170. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 196-202.

support founded in Ledoux's Jansenist education and in his later marriage into a musical family.

In the eighteenth century, literary and operatic themes dwelt with the visual arts in the vapours of antiquity. Cross-disciplinary comparisons can be made between Abbé Terrasson, Christoph Willibald Gluck and Ledoux who structure their work in narrative sequences of crises and climaxes. In Ledoux, this technique reaches full power in the Ideal City but it can be anticipated in his dramatic instinct for framing, best exemplified by the Thélusson arch [Illustration 13] and the tripartite division within the proscenium at Besançon.[171] Ledoux plainly saw it as his role to direct the viewer's contemplation of nature and art. His deep views into architectural space can be compared with static images of the lodge where strictly measured access fueled a visual tension.

Ledoux's directorial skills are compatible with another human trait that personifies his work: paternalism or dictation of the needs of others. Ledoux's tendencies in this area often exceeded the requirements of his aristocratic masters. It is typical of his career that Ledoux put himself and his historical reputation at risk by trading on the power of the Great Architect. Ledoux was capable of flouting 'convenance' and substituting monumentality for utility to satisfy his architectural vision.

The Saline de Chaux (1773 - 1778)

Vidler's Masonic reading of Ledoux's oeuvre concentrates on two projects: the real and the imaginary model cities of rural industrial production, situated in the Franche-Comté, near the forest of Chaux, between the villages of Arc and Senans. The real Saline is documented under two main projects, the second of which was built. The first

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[171]. Vidler finds the same predilection in Ledoux's early work for the Département des Eaux et Forêts. His arched bridges show the influence of Perronet. See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 16.

effort was a square plan in many ways more conventional than his second design but rejected by its commissioners for failing the test of 'convenance.' The second proposal, semi-circular in plan, was detailed and refined through several generations of 'real' and 'ideal' versions. The imaginary Ideal City exists in one version in the engravings of Ledoux's L'architecture...; it is elaborated in the narrative and descriptive passages of his text.

Masonic references are traceable through Ledoux's evolving treatments of the Saline's chapel. In the first square plan, the chapel occupied the southwestern pavilion of the gatehouse. Circular in form, its colonnaded tribune reminds Vidler of the planned chapel of Bénouville.[172] The chapel's position in the complex, surprisingly, was uninflected symbolically as it corresponded to the bakery pavilion in the southeast In the second project, the chapel was linked in importance and utility to the Director's Building which, in its dual purpose of temple and residence, could legitimately be adorned with columns. [Illustration 14] The atmosphere of Freemasonry is palpable in the sectional renderings of the second project's first version. Secretly dominating the Director's Building, the chapel is invisibly inserted into an attic storey of "haughty countenance."[173] Stairs, the width of the chamber, sweep up to a non-denominational altar before a Serlian window that frames it in natural light. [Illustration 15] Vidler sees the tiered interior as a primitive mountain, prepared for the hierarchical gathering of the worshippers. He speculates that Ledoux might have seen Poncet's headquarters for the Grand Orient in Paris. The Director's Building incorporates a model Masonic chapel which is a double square in plan, with triple windows along its sides and front. The first third is taken up by a tribune which is entered between two isolated columns. From the perspective of the gatehouse, these are anticipated by another Masonic reference, the two colossal Doric columns that Ledoux planned

[172]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 90.

[173]. Michel Gallet, Ledoux (Paris: Picard, 1980) p. 113.

for the courtyard.[174]

Reduced to schematic essentials, the exterior of the Director's Building becomes, for Vidler, a "primitive 'restoration' of Solomon's Temple," reminiscent of "Perrault's or Fischer von Erlach's drawings of Solomonic architecture."[175] Finally the effect of the antique was strengthened by an Egyptian reference externally expressed in the pyramidal shape of the roof and echoed in the form of other buildings.[176]

According to Vidler, a Masonic reading of the Director's Building also flows from the overall organization of the site. [Illustration 16] On a diagonal line with the gates, the building becomes the stage of a Greek amphitheatre. The walled industrial village has taken semi-circular form, radiating from the Director's Building which is thereby improved in its function of surveillance.[177] Accordingly, the attic storey is punctuated with windows and, in the built version, the only ornamentation of the stark pediment is an oculus. Eventually, Ledoux explained that the Saline's circular plan imitated the movement of the sun.[178] He wrote: "la forme est pure comme celle que décrit le soleil dans sa course."[179]

Masonic patterns and traits have also been attributed to the Saline's monumental gate. Ledoux cited sources for his design: Julien-David Le Roy's engraving of the Athenian Propylaea, published in 1758. [Illustration 17] However, like Ledoux's later Propylaea, the gates of the Saline offer only limited comparison to Le Roy's classical vision.

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174. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 117.

175. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 117.

176. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 119-121.

177. Vidler, Ledoux, pp. 56-57.

178. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 108.

179. Ledoux, L'architecture..., p. 77.

The Doric portico, though massive and impressive, is merely the outer aspect of the most startling feature of the entrance, a grotto of natural rock built over a post-and-lintel doorway. According to Mosser, the Saline's monumental entrance is of an eighteenth-century type of artificial grotto, designed for gardens and operas on the principal of contrast and internal opposition. Within these columned grottoes, each part was its own foil; the rough-hewn stone contained within it the carved stone; the Doric column proposed its primitive ancestor, the tree. These static elements both symbolized and actualized a perpetual state of metamorphoses, making tangible the engagement between nature and culture, between chaos and reason. The passageway to the Saline has been linked by Mosser to the Masonic rite of initiation, a terrifying series of steps toward knowledge and belonging.[180]

From a social perspective, the hardships of the ritual also are analogous to the working cycle of the Saline whose inhabitants, locked in the embrace of a neo-feudal village, moved daily round the circle of another dimension, on twelve-hour shifts of dangerous, poorly recompensed labour.[181] We have little hard evidence of Ledoux's consideration of that fact, even when he freed himself from programmatic restraint and partook in the new economic and philosophic theory by reshaping his industrial city.

The Ideal City of Chaux (1780 - 1804)

In plan, the Ideal City forms an oval; though Ledoux claimed both mythic and organic origins for his city, his ultimate solution effectively completed the semi-circular ring road of the Saline, mirroring, and thereby doubling, the area of the built design. Ledoux's satisfaction with the Saline is evident in his perpetuation of the original half: the orientation of the area that remains the Saline is still toward the

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[180]. Mosser, "Le rocher et la colonne/Un thème d'iconographie architecturale du XVIIIe siècle," pp. 53-74.

[181]. Vidler, Ledoux, pp. 59-65.

River Loue and the Director's Building keeps its back to the adjacent ideal community. As a late advertisement for his fading career, Ledoux's retention of the actualized project may have aimed to anchor the Ideal City in the realm of the possible. Or, if the Ideal City was in fact developed concurrently with the Saline, Ledoux may have been dreaming of expanding his commission.

Outlining these theories, Vidler supports the convention that allows Ledoux sufficient time and experience to have broadened his definition of an industrial community.[182] Vidler's study of the Ideal City is, however, predicated on the singular notion that Ledoux imagined all the inhabitants to be Masonic initiates, "of the kind propagated by Ledoux's contemporaries in Les Neufs Soeurs or the Grand Orient, with its three almost austere rites."[183] This explains for Vidler the absence "of occultism, of Egyptomania...of the heterogeneous initiatory rituals espoused by adherents of 'les rites écossais' and other hermetic cults."[184] For the Ideal City's inhabitants, the linear progress of reception was finished; its terrors and inequities were behind them. They lived in communcal housing physically emblematic of their function and brotherhood, seeking spiritual confirmation in the "static, non-narrative"[185] temples. With the single exception of the temple of sexual fulfilment that Ledoux called 'Oikéma,' the moralizing institutions or temples of the Ideal City represent to Vidler a new prototype for the lodge.[186]

The nature of this resolved Freemasonry is suggested by the Ideal City's non-denominational church which Vidler relates to Ste-Geneviève.

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182. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 258-266.

183. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 356.

184. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 356.

185. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 356.

186. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 356.

Ledoux's concept was progressive and at some distance from Soufflot's model. He continued on the path of refinement beaten down by Boullée and Combes. Ledoux retained the Greek cross plan and reinforced the pyramidal central altar, while pulling from his own repertoire of theatrical models to strengthen the presence and function of eight side chapels. In nine distinct places of worship, Ledoux envisaged concurrent popular festivals, each marking a stage of life from birth to death.[187] Simultaneity and discretion of function are similarly facilitated by the Ideal City's institutes of order and edification.

Vidler divides these institutions into two types: the four "quasi-Masonic temples" dedicated to Peace, Union, Virtue and Memory; and four lesser houses of natural education (reinforcing the Edenic lessons of the City), sexual pleasure (paving the road to adulthood and guaranteeing the sanctity of marriage), recreation (cultivating citizenship and profit) and games (urban corruption redeemed by sociability).

Three of the "temple" type are the guardians of morality and culture. For Vidler, the Pacifère, the House of Union and the Panarétéon are the equivalents of a Masonic triad of male virtues: Justice, Union and Strength. The Temple of Memory is concerned with the female: Vidler likens it to a "Lodge of Adoption."[188] The Masonic significance of these monuments is clear to Vidler from their names, functions and appearance. He writes, for example, of the Pacifère: "In plan and outside massing, the form of the Lodge was unmistakeable, at once an abstraction of Solomon's Temple and a symbol of the 'asyle' to which any Deist lodge might aspire."[189] This claim, reinforced by the patterned paving, arched partitions and pooled lighting of the lantern, promotes comparison of the Pacifère and the Director's Building (the "primitive 'restoration'"

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187. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 271-272.

188. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 353.

189. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 348.

of the Temple). Inside and outside, they are substantially different in design. The plan of the Pacifère is not a double square but a rectangle proportionally closer to the Golden Section.[190] Its stark exterior is less suggestive of a temple than tomb. At the four corners of the one-storey platform are smoking braziers. The colonnaded halls of the interior are concealed behind a stark facade barely relieved by the rhythm of pilasters and arches, symbolically crafted as fasces and inscribed tablets. Through geometry and iconography, Ledoux has bested the stern physiognomic exterior of his earlier Palais de Justice. Little wonder, then, that the engraving of the Pacifère in Ledoux's L'architecture... depicts two citizens setting their differences outside.

The House of Union, by its name, refers to Brotherhood. Vidler finds particularly Masonic Ledoux's claim for union as "so necessary to maintain order and hasten the flights of virtue that nature itself, by offering us its marvels, has dictated its indefeasible laws."[191] Intended for study, research and intellectual exchange, the House of Union would put principles into practice.[192] Nevertheless, Ledoux appears to have poured into the cubic form abstract ideas of totality and universality.[193] Square in plan, the House of Union is centralized though less dramatically so than the Panarétéon which is a "pure" cube,[194] dominated by a two-storey cylindrical hall. As a symbol of "accomplished virtue," the Panarétéon's interior ramps are likened to "'degrees of perfection,' earned by the inhabitants, like the grades of

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[190]. Ledoux is said to have found his emblematic shape in the symbolic systems of antiquity and the Renaissance: "The form of the cube is the symbol of Justice." See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 348.

[191]. Ledoux, translated by Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 348.

[192]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, p. 348.

[193]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 348.

[194]. Here the cube is extolled by Ledoux as the "'the symbol of immutability.'" See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 349.

Masonic rite."[195] The exterior of the temple is ringed with allegorical figures and inscriptions. Decoration plays a part in the didactic programmes of each of the "temples:" the bas-reliefs wrapping the four columns of the Temple of Memory articulate the purpose of the monument which is otherwise "a 'country house,' with a nine-square plan."[196]

The workshops and sleeping quarters of several classes of workers conform to this same harmonious plan. The House and Workshop of the Charcoal Burners, of the Sawyers, the Woodcutters and the Forest Guards are all organized for communal living around the hearth at the centre of the house. The principal is retained even in Ledoux's most ambitious 'architecture parlante.' His circular, spherical or hooped structures are caverns of sociability that Vidler links to Lequeu's and Vaudoyer's designs for Masonic lodges and private houses.[197] The analogy fits but not, possibly, in the generous way that Vidler intends it. Ledoux's emblematic reinforcement of the various 'métiers' compartmentalizes the Ideal City's workers, effectively neutralizing the threat of excessive sociability.

While Vidler acknowledges Ledoux's persistent yearning for the stability of the Ancien Régime, he illuminates Chaux in a bright Utopian light that he attributes to the influence of the Order. The anachronic distortion of this view parallels Kaufmann's alignment of Ledoux with Le Corbusier.[198] For Vidler, it is not formal but political prescience that Ledoux demonstrates as he offers in his parabolic writings correction to nineteenth-century socialists like Charles Fourier.[199] In the end, Vidler's grasp of eighteenth-century Freemasonry is called into question

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[195]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 349.

[196]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 349.

[197]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 314.

[198]. Emil Kaufmann, Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung und Entwicklung der Autonomen Architektur (Vienna and Liepzig, 1933).

[199]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 336.

by such irrelevant speculation.

His Utopianism aside, Vidler is correct in his catholic view of Freemasonry, but he strains credibility when he attributes such openess to Ledoux. Considering the factious evolution of the Order, it seems unlikely that a single adherent could have embraced so many of its forms. Conflicts between lodges were endemic to the Order. The push from the centre to rationalize the regions ran into serious opposition from loyal adherents to the more tiered or hermetic sects. The most aristocratic lodges were the proponents of an austere orthodoxy with little toleration for the freethinking impiety of Les Neufs Soeurs. Ledoux's personal and professional connections exposed him to the full spectrum of Freemasonry but to find him in his work as reformist, Royalist, cultist and Deist is to contemplate not a man but a flexible architectural instrument of the changing Masonic times.

Evidence of Ledoux's connection to the Order

In light of Ledoux's friendships and commissions, one might be tempted to join Vidler and Braham in their speculations on Ledoux's direct exposure to Freemasonry through membership in the Order or, as Braham puts it, in a "crypto-masonic" cult. On the basis of that hypothesis, one would still be dealing with the public expression of Freemasonry, but in a context of disclosure or, as Vidler prefers it, promulgation, and not as a reflection of the intellectual common property that much of Freemasonry had already become. Ledoux lived and worked surrounded by patrons and peers who had strong engagements with the Order. He was, for example, of an age with the Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg who was born only one year later, in 1737. The duke had become a Mason in 1762, as soon as he was old enough to be initiated;[200] he had immediately founded a lodge. This was the same year that Ledoux architecturally came of age as he achieved his first success with the decorative programme of the Café Militaire. Despite the disparity in their

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[200]. Chevallier, p. 152.

backgrounds, the two men had certain things in common; both were fascinated with their respective affairs, architecture and Freemasonry, which figuratively are closely intertwined.

Like the duke, Ledoux may, himself, have been initiated before 1773, too early to be included in the pre-Revolutionary records of the Grand-Orient, assuming that his activity dwindled or ceased after a short time. Otherwise, being known to the Montmorency-Luxembourg's circle, his name would not likely have been omitted from the rolls.

If ever admitted to the Order, Ledoux the passionate architect might well have been diverted by more pressing commitments. This matches what we know of his character. In 1773, he was received at the Académie Royale d'Architecture where his record of attendance breaks into three phases: a period of initial enthusiasm; distraction in mid-career; and the renewal of his activity in 1782.[201] Membership in the Academy kept him in contact with a number of Masonic architects. Their veiled discussions may have influenced the programmes of the various competitions administered by the Academy while stimulating and reviving in Ledoux ideas gleaned during a possible earlier involvement with the Order.

In addition to the Montmorency, the Marquis de Saisseval, the Marquis de Montesquiou-Fezenzac and the Duc d'Orléans (later Philippe Égalité) were Ledoux's clients and the leaders of French Freemasonry. Ledoux met these men socially. At de Montesquiou-Ferenzac's invitation, he participated in gatherings at Maupertuis, from 1765 to the Revolution; included were the painters, Hubert Robert and Marie-Louise Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, the art dealer Jean-Baptiste Lebrun, the poet and translator Abbé Delille, and the architect Brongniart. Like Brongniart and De Wailly, Ledoux participated as architect and investor in land development deals, some of which arose from his association with de

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[201]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 139.

Montesquiou and the Farmer-General Haudry de Soucy, both Masons.[202] The de Montesquiou circle was perpetuated from 1778 by the Parisian lodge, Saint-Jean d'Écosse du Contrat Social to which also belonged Brongniart who, in 1784, won over Ledoux the commission for the Maupertuis gardens.[203]

In the last days of the Ancien Régime, Ledoux frequented the rooms of the Club de Valois founded in February 1789 under the patronage of the Duc d'Orléans and housed in the Palais Royal. Chevallier explains the eighteen-eighties phenomenon of clubs and societies as a general craze that for some Freemasons filled the need for more intellectual, and ultimately, more political exchange than the lodge could offer. Members of these spin-off clubs obligatorily were Masons.[204] Despite its patron and powerful Masonic membership,[205] the Club de Valois was not necessarily of the Order; Chevallier does not include it in his list of Masonic societies and clubs.[206] Ledoux characterized it as a social club for playing billiards and reading newspapers; he relaxed, however, in an exalted company of Orléanists, followers of de Montesquiou and constitutional monarchists.[207]

Ledoux himself had risen into Parisian society from very modest circumstances. His tireless work, talent and cultivation of connections had developed a list of clients that included aristocrats,

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[202]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 60 and p. 117.

[203]. Vidler speculates that it was in this company at Maupertuis that Ledoux was "introduced to the ideology and symbolism of the Freemasons, important influences in his later utopian work," Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 41-45.

[204]. Chevallier, pp. 310-311.

[205]. Jean-André Faucher, Les Francs-Maçons et le pouvoir (Paris: Librarie Académique Perrin, 1986) p. 35.

[206]. Chevallier, p. 310.

[207]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 364.

soldiers, bankers, and people of the theatre. He had a reputation at Court; he was a member of the Academy; he was Architecte du Roi. Like many self-made men, he was politically conservative. In the political turmoil of the eighties, he remained loyal to the king. His religious views were kept private. He was a family man who finally disinherited his younger daughter in favour of his pupil Pierre Vignon, the architect of the Madeleine.[208]

In her systematic attempt to right the historical record, Helen Rosenau has rejected the notion of Ledoux as a Revolutionary[209] and severely curtailed his image as a Utopian.[210] She accepts, however, his "social concern: his desire to build for all classes of society"[211] without recognizing its obvious connection to his belief that the "'Architecte,' god-like, could solve all problems."[212] Her article concludes, instead, with a psychological reading based on Alfred Adler's profile of the neurotic personality, illuminating Ledoux's feelings of rejection and sketching the character of a man "able to turn his personal difficulties to an understanding of the needs of others, a fact that isolated him in his time, but also helped him to sublimate his difficulties."[213] The final solution to Ledoux's "inner contradiction," the tension between ambitious architect and social visionary,[214] would have been quickly apparent to the gardeners and guards who were the intended inhabitants of the windowless cavities in the arches and bases of Ledoux's entrance to the park at Bourneville. The same "understanding of the needs of others" guided much of his visionary work.

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208. Braham, p. 204

209. Rosenau, p. 178.

210. Rosenau, p. 179.

211. Rosenau, p. 180.

212. Rosenau, p. 179.

213. Rosenau, p. 184.

214. Rosenau, p. 184.

Ledoux seems in many ways to have been quite independent. If himself a Freemason, he did not always have positive and beneficial relationships with his Masonic brethren. His ambitions put him in conflict with known Brothers on more than one occasion, the most intriguing account being that of his somewhat callous disregard of the archaeological values of the site designated for the Palais de Justice and prison of Aix-en-Provence. The demolition of three Roman towers was opposed by the lawyer and prominent Freemason Charles-François Bouche who continued to mourn their loss, calling in 1787 for the memorialization of the towers by the erection of bronze columns on blocks of marble.[215]

Architecture was the obsession that drove Ledoux's social ideas. He believed that each member of society should be recognized architecturally; that each craft or profession should find its own form and authority[216] or, more to the point, that it should be given form and authority by the architect. This paternalistic attitude shines through in his uncommissioned work and in his plans for the Ideal City: the barrel-maker's house is a flamboyant architectural acknowledgement of the barrel-maker's societal role. For Ledoux, architecture was both the level and the ladder, a dichotomy comfortably at home in the philosophies and social tendencies of the eighteenth-century Masonic lodge.

As to the more mystical aspects of the Order, Ledoux's participation in secret societies and the occult has been suspected on the basis of a letter written in 1784 by William Beckford (1759-1844), the English traveller, collector and writer of the oriental tale, Vathek. As has been noted, the story is weighted differently by different historians:

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[215]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 192-195.

[216]. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 21

Vidler reviews it in considerable detail.[217]

The letter tells of a journey undertaken by Beckford and Ledoux during which the younger man was led by the older through a sequence of passages and rooms where he had seen and felt mysterious and frightening things. The adventure had begun after a significant exchange in Ledoux's offices. Beckford had stumbled on a drawing for an elaborate ceiling and Ledoux, initially reluctant to discuss the design, allowed finally that it was "of a sumptuous apartment" belonging to a "revered" and "peculiar" friend. Eventually, he agreed to show Beckford the house, on the condition that he not be asked to reveal its location or precise nature. They set out the following evening, in a closed carriage, travelling beyond the city for what seemed to Beckford more than an hour. They stopped finally before a gate and made the last part of the journey on foot

Passing through the gate, they walked down a long alley lined with what Beckford described as pyramidal wood-piles, arriving finally at the door of the largest of these structures where Ledoux knocked twice before entering. It was a vast, dim and barren hall, lit only from the casements in the roof. They proceeded to the next door, knocked and were admitted to a rustic cottage. This led to more refined quarters, a room with marble decoration and a cockatoo, which in turn gave onto the "sumptuous apartment," where Beckford recognized the ceiling, "richly painted with mythological subjects." Directed by the room's elderly inhabitant to examine the decoration, Beckford noted an elaborate chimneypiece, armouries of brass and tortoiseshell, and a bronze urn on a green porphyry base, with titons and nereids for handles, in which he saw a horrifying vision of "the human form in the last agonies of

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[217]. What follows is a summary of Vidler's account of the letter written by Beckford to his sister-in-law, the former Louise Pitt-Rivers. Vidler has based his account on material found in J. W. Oliver, William Beckford (London, 1932); the quotations of Beckford have been selected by Vidler from Oliver's transcription of Beckford's letter. All are cited from Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., pp. 337-340.

dissolution." They passed on through the doors and up a staircase which Ledoux spoke of with pride. Their destination was a tribune, overlooking a chapel, where streams of light and chanting voices plunged Beckford into an ill-timed recitation of the Lord's Prayer. This loss of nerve, indicated Ledoux, had instantly spoiled Beckford's eligibility for "an opportunity of gaining knowledge which may never return. Had you undergone a slight ceremony we were on the point of proposing, you might have asked any question, however abstruse, with the certainly of its being resolved. You would not only have heard - but seen things ineffable." Retracing their steps through the rooms past the wood-piles, they returned to Paris

For Vidler, who plots the stages of the journey on a horizontal axis in plan,[218] Beckford's is the account of a ceremony, "a mixture of Mesmerist and Freemasonic ritual," including the pyramidal entrance to the underworld, a giant laver like the one before Solomon's Temple, the series of tests and the conductor, Ledoux. Furthermore, says Vidler, Ledoux has added to the ritual another level of symbolism, mirroring "the entire history of civilization in architecture," in the passage from the primitive wood-piles ("the abandoned huts of early man") through Egyptian culture, the "chivalry and magic" of the European Middle Ages, through the eighteenth-century Rousseauesque vision of simplicity, through modern society, to a place "beyond civilization, in a spiritual realm formed out of light in darkness, the sublime vision of a new society."[219]

Transmutation by trial and revelation, and the archetype of the journey are not, as Vidler points out, exclusive to Freemasonry, but if Beckford can be trusted at all, the account does contain glimmers of the Order's architecture and iconography. The structure of succeeding experiences matches the gradual unveiling of the lodge and many of the decorative

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218. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 339.

219. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 340.

motifs seem familiar. As the description of a ceremony, there are striking parallels between the initiatory rites of the Egyptian Mysteries,[220] a theme that already had been essayed fictionally by Abbé Terrasson,[221] and encoded in the rituals of Freemasonry. Lessons of death and resurrection were symbolically captured in the legend of the murder of Osiris which, like the Hiramic legend of murder and retribution, is believed by Freemasons to have been ceremonially reenacted in the initiation to the Egyptian mysteries [222] Nevertheless, while Freemasonry considers Egypt to be the birthplace of the Mysteries, the chronicle of their perpetuation and cross-cultural dissemination is neither the basis nor the equivalent of Masonic initiation; it is a myth, not a ceremony. Vidler's cultural and chronological plotting, from ancient Egyptian verities through European primitivism to Enlightened modernity, seems forcibly progressive and against the current of Masonic reception which moves retrospectively, almost archaeologically, from a profane and present state of ignorance to knowledge imbedded in the past.

Even less convincing, is Vidler's tentative identification of the actual site of the "lodge" visited by Beckford and Ledoux. He notes the resemblances to Ledoux's "lodges" for woodcutters, to the stair at Bénouville, to the salon and chapel of Maupertuis, fixing finally on the Château of Bourneville, designed before 1785, which included a domed chapel, with tribune and hidden crypt, as well as a monumental entrance consisting of two Solomonic columns. These, says Vidler, would have "perfectly corresponded to the ritual remembered by Beckford," a somewhat startling conclusion that sends the reader back to Vidler's paraphrased description of the arrival of Ledoux and Beckford, who "alighted in front of a long, greyish, moss-eaten stone wall" and entered "through a gate." The lack of detail in this description

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220. Mackey, "Egyptian Mysteries," pp. 316-318.

221. Mackey, "Initiations of the Egyptian Priests," p. 318.

222. Mackey, p. 318.

corresponds imperfectly to the dramatic visual impact of the gate at Bourneville. [Illustration 18]

The conflation of Ledoux's designs leads one to another possibility: that the imagination of Beckford, a twenty-five year old writer, was stimulated by his visit to the Ledoux studio, "one of the strangest mock-palaces you ever saw," and that his journey with Ledoux through his models and drawings was the only one they ever shared. Beckford's biographer has noted the presence of Hubert Robert among the Englishman's Parisian acquaintances; his emphasis on certain cultish elements in the Ledoux oeuvre may be attributed to any number of outside influences.

It is not, therefore, biographical evidence that links Ledoux to Freemasonry. One should, instead, consider the wider implications of his recurrent public use of symbols, forms and effects privileged by the Order. They are prominent in his design and decoration of the customs houses of Paris: the network of monuments that Ledoux called the Propylaea.

Chapter IV. The Masonic Symbolism of the Propylaea: History, Programme and Description of the Project; Ledoux's Decorative Scheme; The Ceremonial Entrances of the East-West Axis

Between 1783 and 1789, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux designed and began to build for France a network of approximately fifty buildings to serve as control points for the collection of duty on goods entering the city of Paris. Only four remain: Barrière de Chartres or Rotonde d'Orleans; Bureau de Pantin (Rotonde de la Villette); Bureaux de la route de Vincennes or du Trône; Bureaux de la rue d'Orléans or Barrière d'Enfer. [Illustrations 19 - 22] From their inception, the idea of the buildings, captured in the name "les Barrières," was reviled by the general population, Ledoux's extravagant solution, transforming customs houses into ceremonial gates, his "Propylées," only heightened public opposition to their erection. In 1789, the project, though well advanced, was terminated incomplete. When revolutionary mobs descended on the gates, their torches initiated the destruction that inexorably would progress by stages of neglect and urban planning.

For the rest of his life, Ledoux suffered personally and professionally as a direct result of his association with the Barrières, but his faith in the project never left him. His bitter writings little differentiated between the hooligans who had damaged the monuments and those of a higher order who had failed to understand their value. The mutilation of the Propylaea was tantamount to the end of civilization: "Les ruines des monuments qui constatent la splendeur des nations, annoncent ou précedent la ruine des empires."[223]

For Vidler, whose appreciation of Ledoux is a function of the architect's socialist vision, the Propylaea become a stylistic exercise for the Ideal City of Chaux.

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[223]. Ledoux, L'architecture..., p. 19.

> Whether at the time or in retrospect, Ledoux obviously used the commission for the barrières as a kind of experimental laboratory of type forms and their combinations. Dissociated from their previous functions, these types were open and accessible to new ones: Ledoux seemed almost to recognize that the Ferme's occupation of the barrières was only temporary, and that they awaited their adoption by a different social institution.[224]

Such conjecture is hardly supported by Ledoux's own written defence of his ideas. The Ideal city of Chaux and the Propylaea are discussed separately. When Ledoux joins them, it is to rationalize the figurative transformation of his commissions: bureaux into Propylaea; the house of a dancer into a Temple of Terpsichore..."des champs arides produisent des usines, des villes où les colonnes poussent à côté des orties."[225] Ledoux's Prospectus of 1803 announced that the last volume of L'architecture... would be dedicated to the Propylaea of Paris.[226] The unbuilt inventions of Chaux might have represented Ledoux's dreams but his summary achievement and proof of greatness were the Propylaea. Given the persistence of Masonic symbols elsewhere in his work, it seems worthwhile to consider how Freemasonry might have figured in their conception. There are several important clues. They coalesce in Ledoux's functional and rhetorical amplification of the project, in the elements and decoration of the individual bureaux, and in the siting of two major monuments.

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Ledoux's personal investment in the Propylaea is thrown into relief by the cold light of his clients' pragmatic concerns. An enlarged network

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[224]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 230.

[225]. Ledoux, L'architecture..., p. 16.

[226]. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 378-379.

of walls and customs houses to encircle Paris had been proposed in 1782 by the chemist and financier, Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794). Seen with his wife, Marie-Anne-Pierrette Paulze (1758-1836) in Jacques-Louis David's portrait of 1788, Lavoisier is the quintessential man of the Enlightenment: the intellectual, the scientist, the devoted husband to a woman of natural grace and artistic talent, his collaborator and his muse. The economic underpinning of this elegant scene was inherited wealth and Lavoisier's privileged position as one of forty tax farmers, a group of speculators who, every six years, pooled their resources to buy for a lump sum the right to collect the indirect taxes.[227] Guaranteeing the king a reliable annual income, the tax farmers then reaped whatever profits could be made indirectly from the private consumer through the producers and wholesalers of goods. At the borders of Paris, duty was imposed on basic items such as coal, straw, wood, wine, cooked fruit, carved meat, game and fowl.[228] But the precise location of the border was vague, disputable and open to smuggling. In 1782, Paris was demarcated by walls built in the previous century to replace the ramparts of the old line of defence.[229] In his Essai sur l'architecture of 1753, the Abbé Laugier had deplored the condition of mean palisades, wooden cross-bars swinging on old hinges, the gates of Paris flanked by dung heaps.[230] He called for city-gates more fitting to the ceremonial function of the capital. For Lavoisier, the issue was neither urban beautification, nor 'convenance.' He calculated that the integration and fortification of an expanded Paris would add six million livres to the annual revenue of the Farmers-General In addition, he argued, there were direct social benefits to this economic package: the tightening of the border was linked to greater police control of suburbs

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[227]. Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France Vol. 1 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962) p. 41.

[228]. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 151.

[229]. Illustrated in Braham, p. 193.

[230]. Abbé Laugier, Essai sur l'architecture, 1753, cited by Anthony Vidler, Ledoux, pp. 109-112.

grown dangerous and unruly.

Lavoisier plotted a line that confirmed the interests of the Farmers-General in the northern districts of Roule, the Chausse-d'Antin and Montmartre, and in the south, including the Hôpital général, la Salpêtrière, Vaugirard, le Gros Caillou, l'École militaire and les Invalides.[231] A wall of twenty-four kilometres was needed to encircle the ci γ. It was to be punctuated by fifty-five entry points corresp nding to the existent main roads, the waterways and to projected urban de 'elopment. Lavoisier's first schematic proposal was a simple system of walls and gates.

For an aristocrat and a powerful financier, government approval of a plan to redesign the capital and reorganize the tax base was quite within the realm of the possible. From 1777 to 1781, a Genevan banker was the effective manager of France's financial affairs. Under Jacques Necker, the country was in the grip of a "speculative mania" that saw banks, insurance companies and consortia like the Farmers-General riding a wave of economic confidence, blinded to the escalating national debt.[232] Necker was attentive to the Farmers-General: in 1780, he had reorganized the corporation, reduced its members to forty and instituted a scheme for the sharing of revenues between corporation and state.[233] Lavoisier's scheme fell between dynamic bureaucrats and languished until the appointment of a new Controller-General, Calonne, who, as an advocate of borrowing and building,[234] saw the advantages of the plan. By 1784, the Baron de Breteuil, the Secretary of State with responsibility for Paris, was reviewing an expanded proposal and asking

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[231]. E. Frémy, "L'enceinte de Paris," in Bulletin de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France, 39, 1912, cited by Vidler, Ledoux, p. 112.

[232]. Cobban, pp. 124-127.

[233]. Braham, p. 190.

[234]. Cobban, p. 127.

for more detail.[235]

The elaborated programme included offices and lodging for the eight hundred employees of the Farmers-General: in fact, eight hundred and twenty-four were deployed around the circle in 1790.[236] By rough calculation, there was an average of fifteen employees per customs house: a typical facility would house a brigade of seven guards and a staff of customs officers and clerks, sharing the amenities of kitchens, offices, wine cellars and stock rooms for food and fuel. The smaller posts were to be served with one pavilion while the main thoroughfares would have paired buildings and a corresponding increase in staff. In addition to offices and living quarters, the customs houses also included sentry boxes, observation posts, stables, coach houses and warehousing for confiscated goods. The network was linked by a boulevard on the interior perimeter of the circle. Outside the gates, at the busiest ports, inns were proposed for the accommodation of travellers arriving after-hours.[237]. Part of the customs circuit, but under the aegis of d'Angiviller and the Bureau des Bâtiments du Roi, were two ceremonial entrances to the city on an east-west axis road (the modern Rue de Rivoli) still at that point incomplete.

Ledoux's response to this challenge is documented in many forms: the engraved perspectives of Gaitte, made from Ledoux's records, include conceptions of bureaux and out-buildings burnt down in 1789 or never completed - Barrière d'Orléans, Rotonde des Amandiers, Bureau Poissonière and Bureau d'Ivry; exact plans of the bureaux as they existed in 1790 are bound in two volumes and held in the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris under the name Recueil Blacs; the buildings appear in views of Paris (engravings, watercolours and lithographs); commissioned, commercial and amateur photographs made to

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235. Braham, p. 193.

236. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 154.

237. Vidler, Ledoux, pp. 112-113.

record the city before Haussmann's renovations of the Second Empire (the buildings appear in the photographs of Marville, Atget, Liebert and Gouriot); Ledoux's notes and draft correspondence; thirty-six full plates and four quarter-pages of engravings made under his supervision for his intended five-volume publication, L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation.[238] It has been shown conclusively that Ledoux modified many of his designs for publication[239] but the engravings published in two volumes occasionally comply with what was built.[240] The rest of the engravings represent unfulfilled wishes: designs rejected by the client, revisions and follies. Altogether, this is a substantial archive but fractured and often contradictory. Designs were curtailed or modified during construction; changes are not systematically reflected in the drawings. Even the names of the bureaux are inconsistent: there are several cases of four names in use.

The Farmers-General received royal approval for the project in January 1785. They had already started to build. In the area of La Salpêtrière, on the eastern left bank, construction of what residents thought was a police barrier had begun six months before.[241] The project sped ahead of Ledoux's designs. Between the river and the Bureau de Fontainebleu, his string of buildings has some gaps. One gate in the area is served by a simple house.

Gradually, the enormity of the project began to dawn on the general population. What Paris saw becomes clearer to us when the project is laid out on a map. [Illustration 23] Ledoux and the Farmers-General were undertaking the construction of more than sixty-five buildings on

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238. Gallet, Ledoux, pp. 154-155.

239. W. Herrmann, "The Problem of Chronology in Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's Engraved Work," in Art Bulletin Vol. 42, 1960, pp. 191-210

240. Gallet, Ledoux, pp. 154-155.

241. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 151.

fifty-five sites, each one a customized version of the programme with its own site conditions, engineering problems, construction documents, schedule, crew and neighbours. The logistics alone must have been challenging, even to an architect of Ledoux's experience. The urgency with which he proceeded, the economies and the tactics employed to protect the project as public opposition mounted, can only have exacerbated normal problems of coordination and control. The Bureau de la Route de St Denis, for example, was erected in four months; at one stage, there were 120 workers building the second floor and framing the roof.[242]

The customs houses were not integrating quietly into their suburban settings. In schematic rendering, simple geometric forms and massive elements give a false impression of the scale. The buildings seem intimate, like garden pavilions, whereas they were actually very imposing, as the four remaining examples show. Ledoux argued for their construction as landmarks that would guide illiterate travellers in and out of the city and his ideas prevailed.[243] In an unattributed print of the early nineteenth century, the Bureau de Passy (or de Versailles, or de la Conférence, or des Bonshommes), situated west of the city on the right bank of the Seine, is given as much prominence as les Invalides, St-Sulpice and the Panthéon.[244] [Illustration 24]

To describe and make order in Ledoux's Propylaea, historians have formed two basic strategies: the division of the buildings according to style and innovation; groupings by comparison to earlier buildings, identifying formal precedents and the echoes of Ledoux's own oeuvre. Before revisiting these categories, two preliminary observations can be made. The buildings are classical in derivation, participating in the eighteenth century's architectural revival of formal and spatial

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[242]. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 160.

[243]. Braham, p. 194.

[244]. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 170.

principles founded on the antique, but recourse to the past is never slavish; on the contrary, Ledoux's classicism is generic and unorthodox in application. References to actual buildings are dominated by the precedents in his own work; the buildings are a compendium of Ledoux's accomplishments. He has set between this project and the antique another generation of building - his own - from which he quotes liberally.

The most descriptive stylistic analysis of Ledoux is Emil Kaufmann's exhaustive study which he released over twenty years in articles and published in 1952 as a monograph in "Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux and Lequeu." Kaufmann captures in a series of oracular phrases an architecture of accretion in contrast to the integration and flow of the Classical Baroque. Ledoux's innovation is to treat masses as "aggregates of prisms."[245] In the Propylaea, this leads to a play of opposites and bold interpenetrations of negative and positive space: cylinders rising telescopically from cubes, bevelled corners, dark cavities, and rusticated columns where "Ledoux' (sic) square drums virtually tear the shafts apart."[246]

La Villette is a powerful example of intersecting geometric shapes: the rotunda sheered-off above the colonnade is mounted on a square from which project on all four sides plain octastyle porticoes. [Illustration 20] Surprisingly, the cylinder is hollow: the core of the building is an atrium with an astral dome.

A two-storey niche is impressed in the smooth reflective surface of the Bureau de la Chopinette, the opening defined by a simplified serlian motif. The rectangular building is similarly indented front and back. The odd match of portico and niche which Ledoux had made previously in the House of Mlle Guimard (the Temple of Terpsichore) creates the

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[245]. Kaufmann, "Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu," p. 482.

[246]. Kaufmann, p. 502.

theatrical effect of a sculpted grotto subtracted from a gabled facade. As built, the semi-circular entries incorporated the stairs, creating stark profiles and elevations minimally relieved by unframed windows, the bisecting string course and a textured foundation. Reworked for publication, seven steps project beyond the front and rear walls. Perhaps to compensate for this embellishment, the cyclopean foundations have been turned into smooth stone.

According to Kaufmann, "The double program of dramatized composition and exaltation of the material underlies most of the 'barrières.'"[247] The principal material is stone used in contrasting shapes and finishes to underline its inherent properties. Thirteen of Ledoux's designs feature banded columns, some tied together in pairs forming substantial colonnades. The facade without columns is exceptional· the Bureau de la Croix Blanche and a few unexecuted projects are the only uncurtained facades. Elsewhere, as at Trois Couronnes, the planes are reversed with columns recessed in an arched passageway. The Propylaea effectively ring Paris with a planting of masonry: baseless fluted columns, rusticated columns and the occasional line of square pillars.

With respect to their classical antecedents, Vidler has divided the buildings into five types or schematic versions of antique and Renaissance prototypes. They are prostyle or peristyle temples; variations on Palladio's Villa Rotonda (the Greek cross in a square); cubic pavilions with rusticated entrances; rotundas or circular Doric temples [Illustration 19]; and two or more of these types in combination. He has also noted certain generic forms, including Palladian windows (sometimes joined in series with one or two columns); the Doric order, smooth and baseless with the slight swelling reminiscent of Paestum; rustication in podiums, ground-floors and footings; gables depressed or ornamented with bulging keystones.[248] In

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247. Kaufmann, p. 509

248. Vidler, Ledoux, pp. 113-114.

addition, many of the buildings are crowned with belvederes or attic storeys, like that of the Montmorency Palace, with fenestration on four sides.

The identification of sources and the enumeration of common elements only throws Ledoux's independence of mind into sharper focus. According to his critics, Ledoux was distorting French and Italian sixteenth-century models by excessive quantity and disproportionate scale. He was particularly criticized as he had been in the past for his abuse of columns. The prescriptive writings of Laugier reserved columns for dwellings although Laugier himself had made a confusing exception by condoning the columned Porte St-Denis of Nicolas-François Blondel (1671).[249]

Ledoux's project, therefore, was warring simultaneously on two shifting fronts: in the political arena and in the aesthetic debate over public architecture. From his peers even less than the public, he seems to have garnered little sympathy for the perplexing combination of private and public functions rolled up in the tax farmers' 'cahier de charges.' The unexplained presence of the wall followed by the realization of its purpose; the flurry of construction; the mystifying look of the buildings; their aggressive non-conformity to their surroundings; the obvious cost: all aspects contributed to a hostile public reaction. The population saw the price of food rising with the monuments. Tavern owners whose 'guinguettes' were suddenly within the walls were losing their profits. Landowners were expropriated; neighbourhoods uprooted. Reformist ministers watched the profits of the tax devoured by the cost of construction.[250] Journalists and pamphleteers used the wall as a platform for other issues. One writer linked them to eighteenth-century concerns over public hygiene: the wall was keeping fresh air from

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[249]. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 112.

[250]. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 109.

circulating in the city.[251]

As early as 1784, the project had advanced sufficiently for William Beckford to assess the final outcome. With typical Gothic morbidity, he observed that the "custom-house palaces...from their massive sepulchral character look more like the entrances of a necropolis, a city of the dead, than of a city so damnably alive as this confounded capital."[252] Beckford's remarks have a certain chilling prescience considering the fate of Ledoux's clients in the years of the Terror: twenty-eight of the forty Farmers-General were sent to the guillotine, Lavoisier among them.[253] Ledoux, of course, fared much better. A royalist, scapegoated by the king, he had twice been fired from his job and was languishing in prison. In time, though, he would be released. His perseverance had brought the project close to completion. 'Faute de mieux,' and with profound irony, Ledoux's 'Propylées,' the detested 'Barrières,' were standing as the gates of Revolutionary Paris.[254] [Illustration 25]

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The installation of the Court in the Tuileries had taken place in 1716 under the regency of Philippe d'Orléans who himself resided at the Palais Royal. The eighteenth century would see the start of the beautification of Paris with the broadening of streets, the creation of public squares and the erection of new public works. With the Court had come a popular vision of the city as a hunting park. At the same time, social reformers were calling for the relocation of cemeteries,

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[251]. Braham, p. 196.

[252]. Braham, pp. 193-194.

[253]. Musée du Louvre & Musée national du Château, Versailles, Jacques-Louis David 1748-1825, exh.cat., 1989; note by Antoine Schnapper, p. 192-194.

[254]. Le retour de Varennes, an engraving after J. L. Prieur, depicts the King of France returning to Paris, greeted by stony silence. In the background, is the Bureau du Roule. See Gallet, Ledoux, plate 281, p. 173.

hospitals and abattoirs to purify the urban environment.[255] New types of commissions prompted a reconsideration of architectural priorities, weighing function and appearance in the balance. In apparent contradiction to the progressive attitudes of the Enlightenment, even the 'philosophes' seemed to confirm the canon of classicism advocating strict and hierarchical 'convenance:' all aspects of a building should be compatible with its intended function and should announce that function with clarity. The bureaux had several functions but only by obscuring all of them could Ledoux appear to be following architectural convention. In one grandiloquent allusion, he masked the banality of the enterprise and obliquely disclosed his authority.

This was taken to be the Propylaea of the Athenian Acropolis, literally 'the gate before' the temple, built on its the western approach. The older form of the Propylaea, from the early fifth-century B.C., was a simple marble structure consisting of two Doric porches projecting before and behind the gate in the fortress wall. The second stage was an elaboration of the first, retaining the configuration of porch and gate but widening the facade into a hexastyle Doric portico and flanking it at right-angles with adjoining pavilions. The single entrance controlled access to the Acropolis and eased the transition of human visitors and sacrificial animals up the hill toward the temple. Choosing either the north or the south stairway, visitors followed a sequence of stairs, portico and platform. With carts or animals, they made their way along a wide roadway that passed between the stairs, through the central columns of the portico and between the interior platforms. The north-west wing was intended to be a picture gallery; the south-west wing would have made a connection to the temple of Athena Nike; for reasons of propriety and austerity, the wings were never completed.

The version of the Propylaea that Ledoux might have known is neither the first nor the second: he made no first-hand observations on site; he

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[255]. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 68

never visited Greece. He was, however, familiar with the sketches of Julien-David Le Roy,[256] which he had cited earlier. Le Roy's conception of the Propylaea omits the ramped passageway and unifies the entrance in a majestic flight of stairs. The pavilions run parallel to the entrance and project beyond the front facade. With minor alterations (the restoration of the ramp, for example), Le Roy's Propylaea would have satisfied fully the requirements of the Farmers-General and provided Paris with magnificent and secure classical gates. Ledoux was not, in principle, opposed to the building type. Among the bureaux, on a smaller scale, are many variations on the Athenian model. He clustered them on the eastern edge of the circle at Montreuil, Charenton and Bercy. But the opportunity to display his erudition and affirm the connection of his project to Greek antiquity was the important western pavilion to be built for the king on the east-west axis: the Bureau de Chaillot or de l'Étoile [Illustration 26] where Ledoux, with the full knowledge of his clients, modelled the twin pavilions on the Director's Building of an industrial village in the Franche-Comté. [Illustration 14] The Athenian precedent was effectively dismissed.

Another 'gate before' a temple that Ledoux might have had in mind was the Gate of the Temple of Solomon. The building of the Temple of Solomon is the central myth of Freemasonry and many Masonic images have been culled from Biblical accounts of the wondrous construction, in The First Book of the Kings and in the third part of The Second Book of Chronicles. In neither of these books is there mention of a gate; there is only the door to the Temple.

In The Prophets, however, among the visions of Ezekiel, is a detailed description of a temple in Jerusalem which Ezekiel visits with an angel. They walk the property beginning with the east gate. The square complex includes an outer court and an inner court. There are corresponding gates on the east, north and south sides; there is no mention of a gate on the west side, only a building. The complex also includes guardrooms

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[256]. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 69

and lodgings for the priests. Measurements are taken everywhere including the temple which is almost an exact replica of the Temple of Solomon. When Yahweh arrives through the east gate and his spirit fills the temple, Ezekiel hears a voice that tells him to draw up the design and plan of the temple and to carry it to the House of Israel, "so that they can see and take note of its design and the way that it is arranged and carry it out."[257]

Masonic teaching distinguishes between the Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Ezekiel with typical ambiguity. One is historic and symbolic while the other is archetypal and visionary.[258] Some interpreters have combined all three descriptions into one while others restrict the Temple of Ezekiel to the symbolic sub-category of the Apocalypse, itself no small part of the Masonic code. None of this debate affects the Masonic article of faith that there are gates to the temple on the east, west and south sides, symbolizing the progress of the sun as an allegory of birth, life and death. Nearly every Masonic representation of the Temple includes "surrounding courts" with "gates at every point in the compass."[259] The gates of the Temple are incorporated as well into the symbolic code. Like the temple, the gates are an idea concreted in a symbol and propagated by a myth. That Ledoux wished to participate in this myth is supported by the iconography, plan and character of his designs for the Propylaea.

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Neither Kaufmann nor Vidler says much about the decorative scheme planned for the Propylaea. Vidler sets his course early by repeating without comment what Schapiro had seen as Ledoux's "refusal of

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[257]. Ezekiel 43:11-12, The Jerusalem Bible.

[258]. Mackey, "Temple," "Temple of Ezekiel," and "Temple of Solomon," pp. 1020-1023.

[259]. See Mackey, 'Gates of the Temple,' p. 387.

ornament."[260] Admittedly, Ledoux's emphasis on iconography scarcely survived his schematic elevations but he went to some pains to correct the record in his published retrospective. Decorative fragments of the Propylaea are scattered throughout the engravings and even appear on the frontispiece. They are all designs for bas-reliefs, including one frieze, one horizontal panel and seventeen vertical panels. The designs appear on ten sheets where, generally, they are identified, as well as being listed in the table of plates as "Fragments de Propylées de Paris," 'figures allégoriques des Propylées de Paris," or "figures des Propylées de Paris."[261] In the frontispiece [Illustration 27], Vidler espies amidst the Masonic emblems that surround the bust of Ledoux,[262] "a frieze of shields taken from the Barrières,"[263] but his recognition of the source prompts no further reflection on the possibility of Masonic significance in the Barrières as a whole. Vidler gives no indication of having noticed the preponderance of such figures in Ledoux's publication. His identification of the type could have been made from the extant examples on the Barrière d'Enfer. [Illustration 28]

In L'Architecture ., there are two categories of figures assigned to the Propylaea· single female figures with shields and discreet attributes [Illustration 29]; female and male figures actively engaged with a large object, an animal or another figure, making music. Ledoux is said to have intended to mount on the Propylaea emblems of the

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260. Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. x.

261. Volume I. Plates 77 (Market of the Ideal City) and 93 (House of a Merchant of Fashion). Volume II: Plates 159 and 160 (Projects for the Propylaea); 204 and 205 (Library of Hesse-Cassel); 213 and 214 (headquarters of the Farmers-General - no captions on the sheets); 283 (House of Mlle St. Germain), and 360 (Roche-Bernard sheep-pen).

262 According to Vidler, the Masonic elements are a compass, a square, a telescope and a branch of acacia. The bust of Ledoux is installed between caryatids in an architrave. Drawings of the Palais de Justice and prisons of Aix and of two of the Barrières (all projects mourned by Ledoux) complete the still life. See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 379.

263. The nine female figures of the frieze remind Vidler of the Loge des Neuf Soeurs. See Vidler, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux..., p. 379.

provincial towns of destination. Insignia may indeed appear on the shields of the frieze but they are presented by allegorical figures that point in other directions. [Illustration 30]

Eleven of the female figures for the panels appear as personifications of Paris. They are crowned with miniature versions of the walls. Some hold keys, an important symbol of Freemasonry, especially during the eighteenth century. For the ancients, the key was the symbol of silence and circumspection. In the Egyptian mysteries of Isis, "the key was a hieroglyphic for the opening or disclosing of the heart and conscience in the kingdom of death, for trial and judgement."[264] Likewise, in Christian iconography, the key is the symbol of confession. In eighteenth-century ceremonies of initiation, an allusion was made to the key which was needed to gain access to the secrets. It hung "by the thread of life at the entrance."[265] The key was immaterial, purely symbolic. It was a virtue, a "tongue obedient to reason,"[266] able to speak only well of others in their absence as well as in their presence One crowned figure holds a sprig of false acacia or robinia, named for the royal gardener at Paris and widely substituted in French Freemasonry for acacia.[267] Both function as symbolic greenery like lettuce, the lotus, heath, myrtle, mistletoe or the olive branch, which are equal before Masons as carriers of the same trinity of meanings: immortality, innocence and initiation.[268]

Four female figures are winged like the male figure in the frieze. Some

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[264]. Mackey, "Key," p. 516.

[265]. Mackey, "Key," p. 516.

[266]. Mackey, quoting from Masonic catechism, in "Key," p. 517.

[267]. It is likely robinia that appears with the bust of Ledoux in the frontispiece.

[268]. Mackey, "Acacia," pp. 10-12.

wear a laurel crown, sign in Freemasonry of victory over passion.[269] Each, like the male, carries a chisel which in Masonic symbolism evokes the hand of the artist uncovering the beauty of the hewn or squared stone, thereby referring to the advantages of education, the discovery of the latent virtues of the mind.[270] These figures are reminders of Ledoux's statement from L'Architecture...:

> Je différencierai la décoration pour la présenter dans ses contrastes. La pierre, sous la touch de l'art, éveillera un nouveau sentiment, développera ses propres facultés.[271]

In Freemasonry, the hewn stone is symbol of the mason's improved and perfected nature.[272] Each Mason becomes a building block of the temple.

Of the passive female figures, one crowned, with key, and one winged, with chisel, are paired on a single panel that includes also fasces and shields inscribed in Latin: ÆDES LUXU INSTRUITUS / DOMUS FIDE COMPONITUR. (Munificence founds the Temple; a House is built on Faith.) [Illustration 31]

The activity of the remaining figures is celebratory or ritualistic in nature. One female figure raises a term onto a pedestal, while two others dance across their panel, one playing a wind instrument, the other carrying a basin. One male figure wrestles a ram; another carries a steaming basin; one lone figure grasps a censer that is adorned with harpies; another pair, a man and a youth, dance and play instruments.

Of the active male figures, two with laurel crowns are particularly suggestive of eighteenth-century Freemasonry. One lifts onto a pedestal

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269. Mackey, "Laurel Crown," p. 567.

270. Mackey, "Chisel," p. 200.

271. Ledoux, L'architecture..., p. 14.

272. Mackey, "Stone," p. 970.

a large fuming censer, its square base carved into four tetramorphic torsoes, sphinxes or apocalyptic monsters. [Illustration 32] St John the Evangelist, writer of the Book of Revelations, was a patron of Freemasonry and claimed also as a brother.[273] The Apocalypse and its resemblance to ancient mysteries promoted a conflation of Christian and Pagan symbols: the tetramorph combining the spirit, the soul, the mind and the body with all the power of the elements - fire, water, earth and air - captured in the perfect number four.[274] The censer was, and is, part of the furniture of the lodge and incense was burnt at ceremonies of initiation. The other male figure leads a bull, an aggregate symbol of fertility and death, a sometime allusion to the Egyptian lunar god Osiris.[275] [Illustration 33] He also shoulders an axe which, as a symbol of light,[276] cleaves the pyramidal stone and unleashes its wisdom The elongated handle also suggests a battle-axe which generally entrains the same meaning as the sword, hammer and cross[277] but would have served Ledoux personally as a memento of achievement, as a reminder of his acclaim for the design of the Café Militaire with its heraldic motif of crossed arms. On the same biographical track, the reference can be traced back further to Ledoux's youthful work as an engraver during which time he produced a series of battle scenes, now lost Rediscovery of those engravings would enhance our understanding of Ledoux's early development and might also furnish clues to the kind of working environment that he first experienced.

Early in the eighteenth century, before the establishment of Speculative Freemasonry, Minerva and Mercury were installed as the standard bearers of the Knights of Jubilation, an international organization of Masonic

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[273]. Mackey, "Freemasonry of the Apocalypse," pp. 89-90.

[274]. J. E. Cirlot, "Tetramorphs," in A Dictionary of Symbols, (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) p. 337-339.

[275]. Cirlot, "Bull," pp. 33-35.

[276]. Cirlot, "Axe," p. 21.

[277]. Cirlot, p. 21.

character that married wisdom and enlightenment to the dissemination of ideas and commerce. The Knights counted among their number writers, publishers and booksellers, many of whom had recourse to the services of a fellow of their Order, the influential artist and engraver, Bernard Picard. The 'official' engraver for the Knights, Picart practised in Paris from 1688 to 1709 when he left under a cloud for his engraving in praise of Descartes. He then established himself in The Hague. Much of Picart's mature work includes images of Minerva and Mercury; in the sixteenth century, Minerva had been the symbol of Dutch struggles against the Spanish and the symbol remained potent with Dutch Freemasons [278]

Picart's engravings were very influential for their technical proficiency as well as their iconography. Of note is his symbolic title-page for the 1720 edition of Pierre Bayle's Dictionnaire, a publication in the genre of the Enlightenment encyclopedia, which engraving includes Minerva, Mercury, the compass, and the square. After the death of Louis XIV (1715), Picart was able on a few occasions to return to Paris but he continued to make his home in the Netherlands. Direct contact with Ledoux, who was born in 1736, is naturally out of the question but Ledoux, starting in 1750 as an engraver's apprentice, would have been exposed to the Picart codex if only through the interim generation that adopted the proto-Masonic Minerva of the Knights as the goddess of printing.[279]

Near the end of the second volume of L'Architecture..., three more decorative fragments of the Propylaea appear with the cross-shaped plan of the sheep-pen for Roche-Bernard. [Illustration 34] The central allegorical figure is clearly Minerva. On either side are Victories with chisels and laurel crowns. The inscription on their shields draws them together. It is one of Horace's ironic pastorals and it reads:

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[278]. Margaret C. Jacob, The Radical Enlightenment, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981) pp. 164-165.

[279]. Jacob, pp. 165-167.

"Ut iuvat pastas oves videre properantes domum." (How pleasing it is to see hastening home the sheep that have been fed.)

Considering the engraved 'fragments' of Ledoux's decoration, it is not altogether dismissable that his Masonic tendencies might have predated his architectural career, coming to him purely emblematically through the printed page and reemerging there at the end of his life. This would not imply, however, that Masonic ideas lay dormant throughout his architectural practise but that Ledoux would have completely assimilated their purely symbolic nature and gone beyond the need for literal translation.

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Ledoux's design for the Bureau du Trône was completely unlike his other bureaux. It featured two colossal free-standing columns. These were accompanied by two square pavilions, windowless on their front facades, and with deep archways, decorated with square pillars, leading to the centre of the building.

Ledoux worked through a number of alternatives for the columns, leaving several contradictory clues to the authoritative version. Documentation includes a white model which features smooth columns reminiscent of the entrance to the Park at Bourneville. Ledoux's written rationale is somewhat different, emphasizing a decorative scheme of trophies and allegorical figures that expressed commercial freedom and "fortune publique" in its accessories and inscriptions. This was the version that was built. What we see today is more elaborate than Ledoux's earlier executed design as the columns were embellished during the reign of Louis-Philippe.[280] [Illustration 35]

Gallet refers to Ledoux's original concept which is recorded in an

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[280]. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 161.

engraving by Le Campion,[281] published in 1789, in the Vues Pittoresques des principaux Édifices de Paris.[282] "Vue de la Nouvelle Barrière du Trône," a medallion in form, shows one column in its entirety, one in part and one of the flanking buildings. [Illustration 36] An eastern perspective is suggested by the position of the cattle and the bundled goods passing on the dirt road between the columns Le Campion's engraving clearly predates a view by Courvoisier [Illustration 37] which confusingly features smooth ringed columns in a built-up district served by a finished road congested with commercial and military traffic (the lonely purveyor of farm goods can barely be seen among the cannons, carriages and leaping mounts of the soldiers) In Le Campion's view, Ledoux's decorative plan is captured in a few strokes: statues surmounting the column, seated allegorical figures at the base, and in between, a draping of trophies. Ledoux put his intentions in writing: "je placerai les trophées de la victoire aux issues fermées qui mutilent ses lignes de tendances;"[283] The heraldic motif is reminiscent of the doorway of the Hôtel d'Uzès, while the overall simplification of the columns is a precursor to the entrance to the Park at Bourneville, a later private commission. There the motif is immediately recognizable; the pattern of the plan is more circumspect. Ledoux's cross-section of the Bourneville columns reveals dizzying flights of winding stairs. In the ideal Masonic temple, winding stairs begin at the porch, symbolizing man's passage toward enlightenment. The initiate climbs, always turning on himself to seek inner knowledge as he moves toward the summit. Surmounted by an opening, Ledoux's columns are also watch-towers, the architectural equivalents of speculation. Whatever meaning was intended, Ledoux was clearly interested in this dual function: he

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[281]. Gallet, Ledoux, p. 161.

[282]. Plate no. 99. See Françoise Gardey and Yves Sjoberg, Inventaire des graveurs français du XVIIIe siècle (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1974) p. 411.

[283]. Ledoux, L'architecture..., p. 18.

explored it further in an unbuilt project for the Propylaea.[284] [Illustration 38]

If the Solomonic prototype were not clearly articulated in the design of the Trône columns, their siting at the eastern extremity of the east-west ceremonial road confirms their templed origins. This site, as well as the opposite one at the Étoile, was outside the authority of the Farmers-General and of vital interest to the court. At the opposite end of the royal road, Ledoux built twin pavilions that quoted from his design for the Director's Building at Chaux. These projects were subject to intense scrutiny by the Bâtiments du Roi; the director d'Angeviller's intervention in the character and iconography of the buildings at the Étoile is recorded in correspondence.[285] The radiating plan of the Étoile reminds us of Vidler's Masonic reading of Chaux, one he has not extended to the Bureau de l'Étoile despite the similarities in plan and siting.

The Bureau du Trône took the place of the seventeenth-century triumphal arch designed by Claude Perrault "to commemorate the king's entry into Paris and his plenipotentiary rule in 1660 by the Vincennes road."[286] Perrault's monument, erected under Louis XIV, was never completed; contemporaneous documents show a scale model built of lath, cloth and plaster over a stone plinth.[287] Perrault had made his intentions very clear: visually and functionally, he had forged a link with the eastern facade of the Louvre. The crumbling arch was demolished in 1716 though the vacant site retained its prestige under the control of the Bâtiments du Roi. It was therefore given to Ledoux to perpetuate the spirit of Perrault's plan which was to make the principal entrance to the Louvre

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284. Ledoux, L'architecture..., Plate 157.

285. Vidler, Ledoux, p. 115.

286. Rykwert, n. 16, p. 94.

287. Rykwert, p. 89.

from the east.[288] Ledoux's solution, as usual, was a blending of authorities.

Masonic literature insists on a prototypical lodge plotted on an east-west axis, with its entrance and colossal columns in the west.

> The idea of a separation into a holy and a most holy place has everywhere been preserved. The same idea is maintained in the construction of Masonic Lodges, which are but imitations, in spirit, of the ancient Temples. But there has been a transposition of parts, the most holy place, which with the Egyptians and the Jews was in the West, being placed in Lodges in the East.[289]

What then should one make of this fragment of eighteenth-century French Masonic catechism?

> Q. What form does our lodge have?
> A. A long square.
> Q. Where is it situated?
> A. Exactly from the East to the West.
> Q. Why?
> A. Because all edifices dedicated to the divine cult must be there.[290]

This apparent contradiction of Masonic orthodoxy validates what might otherwise be dismissed as Ledoux's ignorance or misuse of the prototype. It reinforces the phenomenon of the Temple as an fugitive abstraction which had been pursued by Biblical scholars long before the inception of

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[288]. Rykwert, pp. 88-89.

[289]. Mackey, "Temple," p. 1021.

[290]. From a manuscript preserved by the Great Lodge of the Netherlands, the passage is an extract from "Materiaux sur la Maçonnerie," rules brought from Dijon by Frère Adolph vin Schweinitz; cited by Jacob, pp. 126-127.

modern Freemasonry.

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In and of themselves, manifestations of interest in the Temple of Solomon were not necessarily symptomatic of the author's Masonic affiliation; in the eighteenth century as now, the Temple was a powerful and intriguing monument of Judaeo-Christian culture, whether as abstraction or concrete visualization. The evocation of the Temple entrained meaning and opinion on many levels: spiritual, ideological, philosophical and poetical. Having adopted Solomon's Temple as the keystone of their symbology, Freemasons entered into a complex debate inseparable from the polemic of architectural factions, each anxious to possess and resituate the Temple in relation to their aesthetic. This was a delicate matter, given the sacred source of this architectural revelation and the obscurity of its specifications.[291] Charles De Wailly was but one in an extensive chronology of architects and draughtsmen who undertook the visual translation of measurements and written descriptions. In the previous century, Claude Perrault had been tasked with the same problem,[292] and others similarly were inspired: engravers like Matthias Hafenreffer, Matthaeus Merian, Jacob Jehudah Leon[293] and Juan Bautista Villalpanda.

Perrault's drawings, for example, were commissioned by the Hebrew scholar Louis Compiègne de Veil who was translating into Latin the Mishneh Torah or Code of Maimonides, including Book Eight, the Book of

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[291]. The theological and architectural debate is summarized by Rykwert who emphasizes the published contribution (1596-1604) of Juan Bautista Villalpanda. See Joseph Rywert, On Adam's House in Paradise (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1981) pp. 120-140.

[292]. Wolfgang Herrmann, "Unknown Designs for the 'Temple of Jerusalem' by Claude Perrault," in Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower, Fraser, Hibbard and Lewine, eds. (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1969) pp. 143-158.

[293]. Provoyeur and Provoyeur, pp. 150-153.

Temple Service, which dealt with the Temple of Jerusalem. Having studied the Maimonides description, Perrault supplemented it with readings from Ezekiel, the Polyglot Bible and previous visual attempts. His research and his authorial predisposition produced drawings of an austere compound that little comforted those who sought in the Temple a prototype for Classical supremacy. Wolfgang Herrman's exhaustive overview of this exercise is illustrated with disparate images of the Temple that would have served as sources for Perrault and anyone who followed. Herrmann's article includes an annotated list of major works on the Temple known and widely used during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There was no lack of material for Ledoux to consult. Though he would have encountered many solutions to the plan and elevation of the Temple, a consistent element would have been its orientation. Perrault's plan places the entrance to the Temple of Jerusalem in the east. Conflating his sources, Ledoux did the same, by installing at the eastern gate the Masonic columns of Jachin and Boaz.

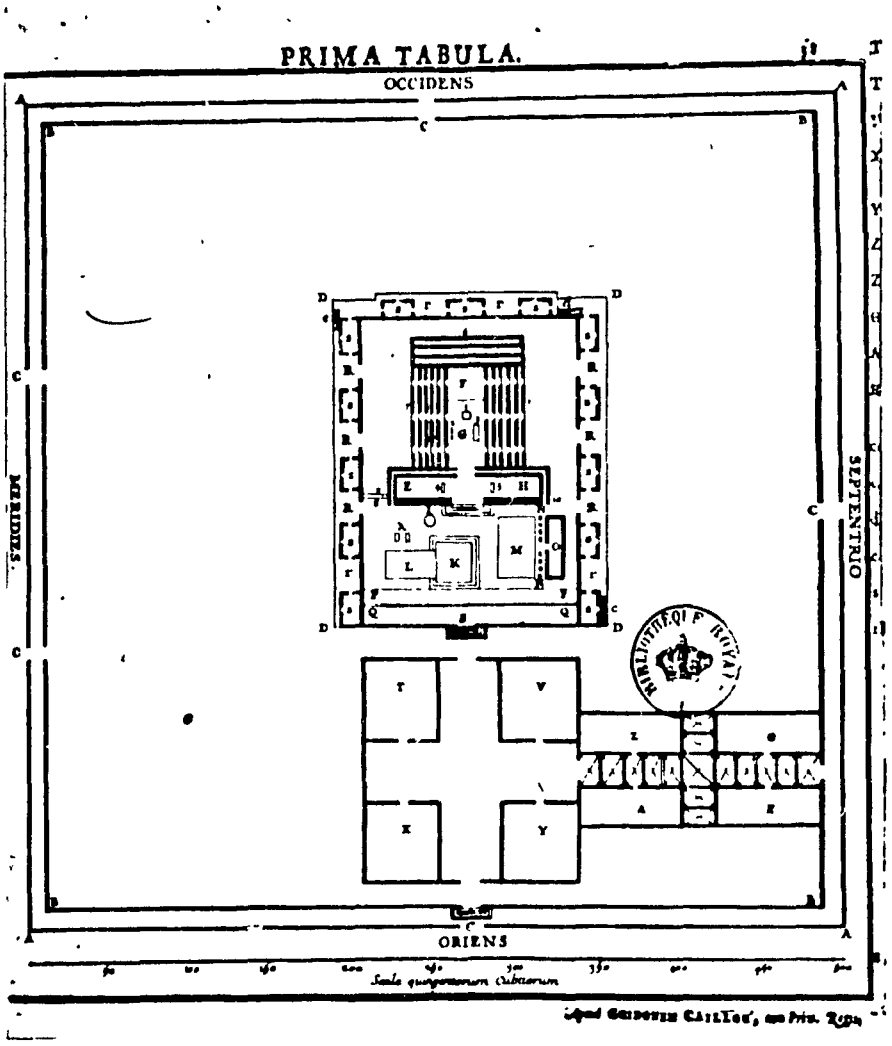

Figure 3. Claude Perrault. Plan of the Temple, 1678

In Freemasonry, knowledge and power flow from the Orient to the Occident. The chivalric foundations of eighteenth-century Freemasonry are underscored by Ledoux's display of trophies on the columns through which the glorious Crusaders would have entered the modern city of Paris. Ledoux recognized instinctively that myth and ritual collapse the historical dimension of time. His interpretation of the architectural origins of Masonic myth transformed the royal city into a new Jerusalem.

Conclusion. Neoclassical Architecture and the Migration of Masonic Symbols

The Propylaea are a stylistic and ideological hybrid, combining elements of classicism and enlightenment in the service of a bankrupt and autocratic regime. By the reductive geometry, grand scale and deep codification of the Propylaea, Ledoux seems to have advanced to the state what is proper to revolution: a rigorous new vocabulary of form. The symbolic investment in these walls reminds us of the power of architecture to translate into beguiling figurative language, societal structures of real, sometimes unspeakable, dimension.

Whether through rumour or inculcation, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux appears to have grasped the fundamentals of Masonic symbolism. The orthodoxy of his return to Solomonic origins and his conflation of mythic imagery betray either an incomplete knowledge of the Order or a true Masonic desire to keep secrets. The corollary to either theory is the same: we are left with persuasive visual evidence of the partial disguise that was eighteenth-century Freemasonry's public visage.

Joseph Rykwert's study of the inception of Modern architecture ends with an examination of architectural metaphor. He dwells longest on Soufflot's painstaking development of Ste-Geneviève. Rykwert admires the coherence of Soufflot's synthesis of architectural quotation and traditional Christian symbols. He detects in the project a highly complicated programme of elements, including a hidden source of "initiatory light,"[294] all subordinated to a formal superstructure of meaning. On a much smaller scale, Rykwert finds comparable integration in Ledoux's Café Militaire of 1762[295] but Soufflot's unattainable project for Ste-Geneviève achieves the status of a lost masterpiece.

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[294]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 468.

[295]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 467.

Borrowing from Diderot, Rykwert calls Soufflot's treatment of light, "an architectural hieroglyph, an indication of the veiled language in which the iconographic themes are couched."[296] The overall form of the church is perhaps "the last architectural hieroglyph, so rarified...that it had to break: Soufflot himself could not sustain the brilliant amalgam over its many transformations."[297] Rykwert is dismayed by this realization: to him, Soufflot's impossible vision was the last gleaming in the twilight of a profoundly metaphoric age.

> The past could never again provide a quarry of detail and of allusion: the division of history into periodic styles separated such forms into specific references on one hand and conventional surfaces on the other.[298]

Curiously enough, Rykwert marks the beginning of this figurative decline with what he construes as a Masonic event. the laying of the first stone of Ste-Geneviève in 1764. All concerned, he says were Freemasons In this he includes the king, Soufflot, Jean-Baptiste Puisieux and the canon of the church, Guy Pingré.[299] Scholars of Masonic history have resisted such blanket identifications: Puisieux's involvement is known to have begun much later; the Masonic king exists only as an oblique reference in Pingré's ode to the occasion; Soufflot's link to the Brotherhood is as yet of similar poetic provenance With more rigour, Rykwert provides a convincing explanation for the rise of Freemasonry in a period when the effectiveness of the architect was being eroded, as much by his isolation in the Academy as by the vulgarization of his erudition and skills. Within the Order, the role of the architect was

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[296]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 468.

[297]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 468.

[298]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 468.

[299]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, pp. 458-459. In his endnote, Rykwert also includes the goldsmith, Jacques Roëttiers "who cast the medal for the foundation-laying ceremony." See no. 164, p. 500.

exalted, albeit symbolically. Architecture was the emblem of personal and social improvement.[300]

Rykwert leaves the Enlightenment architect on a shifting intellectual field where the formal principles of architecture were being divided as adversarial pawns in a greater social and political game. This is the arena where we find Vidler championing the Utopian reformist in Ledoux.

Both Rykwert and Vidler have altered our understanding of the relationship of Freemasonry and architecture. They have pored over the eighteenth century for the authentic signatures of Freemasons. Vidler, in particular, has sought to trace a Masonic secret, forgetting the erratic patterns of ideational migration. Neither he, nor Rykwert, has considered how Masonic symbolism may have entered and flourished in the mind of the profane. The answer may lie in the example of Ledoux's Propylaea. In his monument to speculation, Ledoux resolved publicly the Masonic use of ancient models as metaphors in Modern architectural form.

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[300]. Rykwert, The First Moderns, p. 469.

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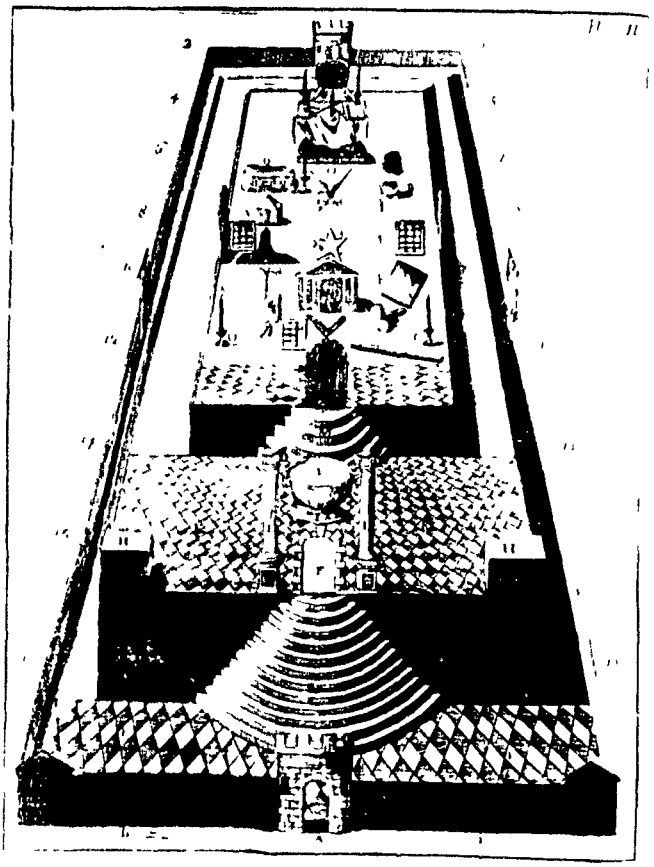

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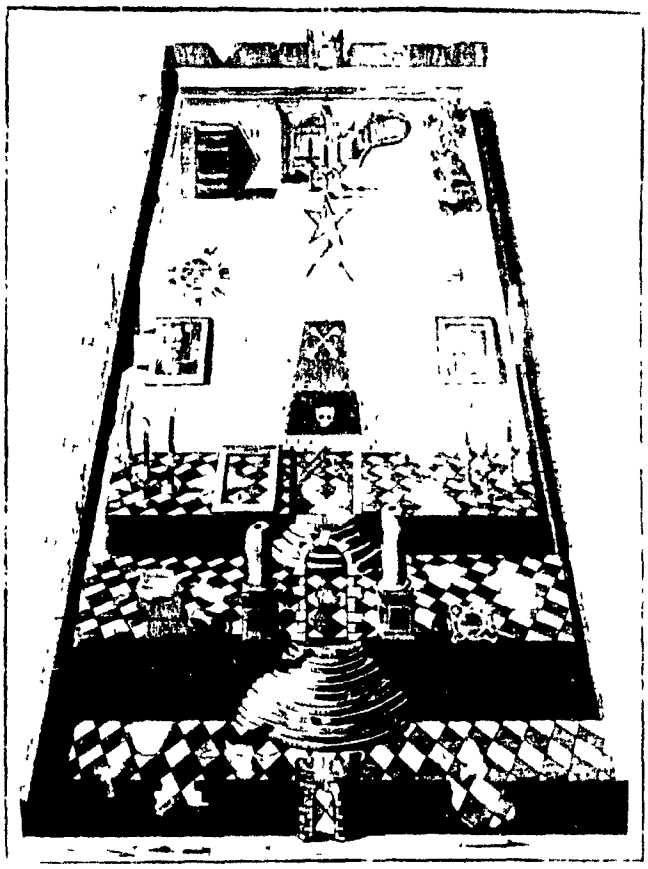
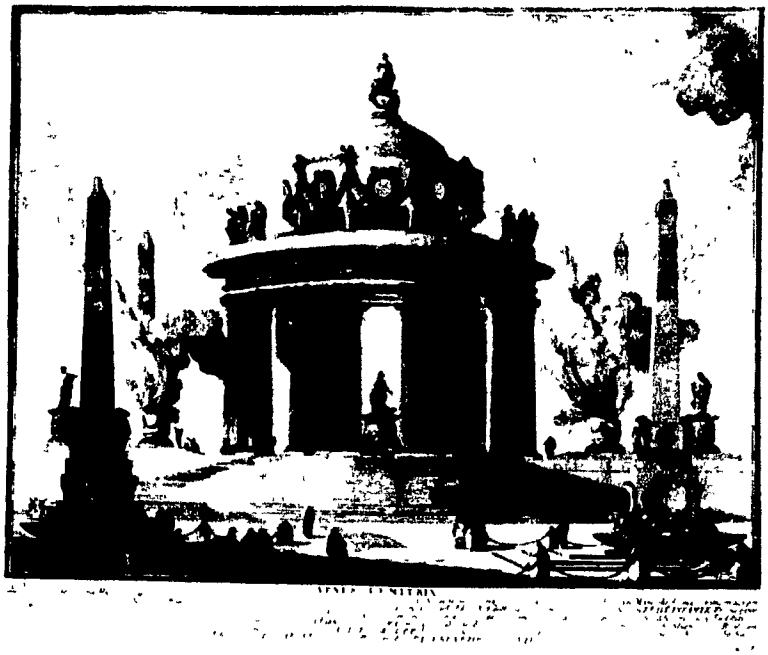


3. Charles De Wailly. Restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem, 1766.

4. Charles De Wailly. L'Intérieur du Temple de Jérusalem avec la dernière scène d'Athalie, 1785.

5. Charles De Wailly. Interior view toward the Orient, Project for a Masonic Lodge (Hôtel de Bullion?), 1774.

6. Pierre-Louis Moreau-Desproux. Festival decoration in honour of the birth of the Dauphin (Temple of Hymen), 1782. Drawing.



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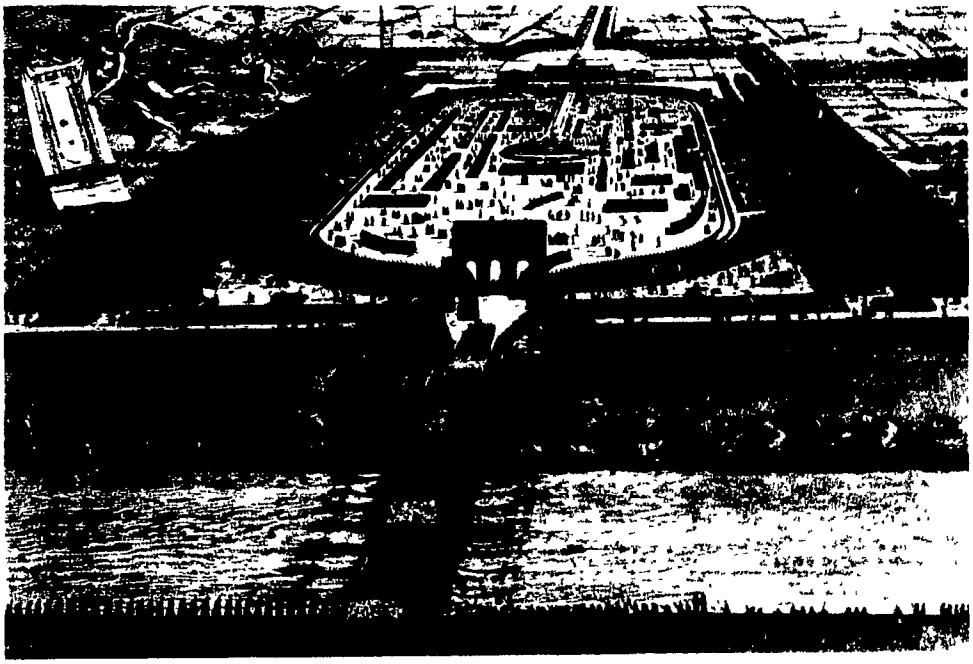
8. Coloured engraving after Cloquet. Vue général de la Fédération prise à vol de oiseau au dessus de Chaillot, 1791.



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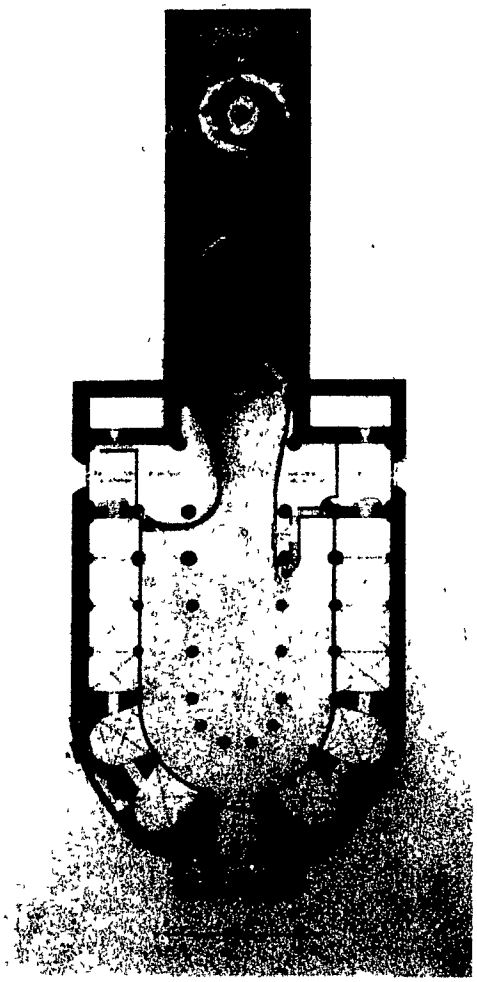

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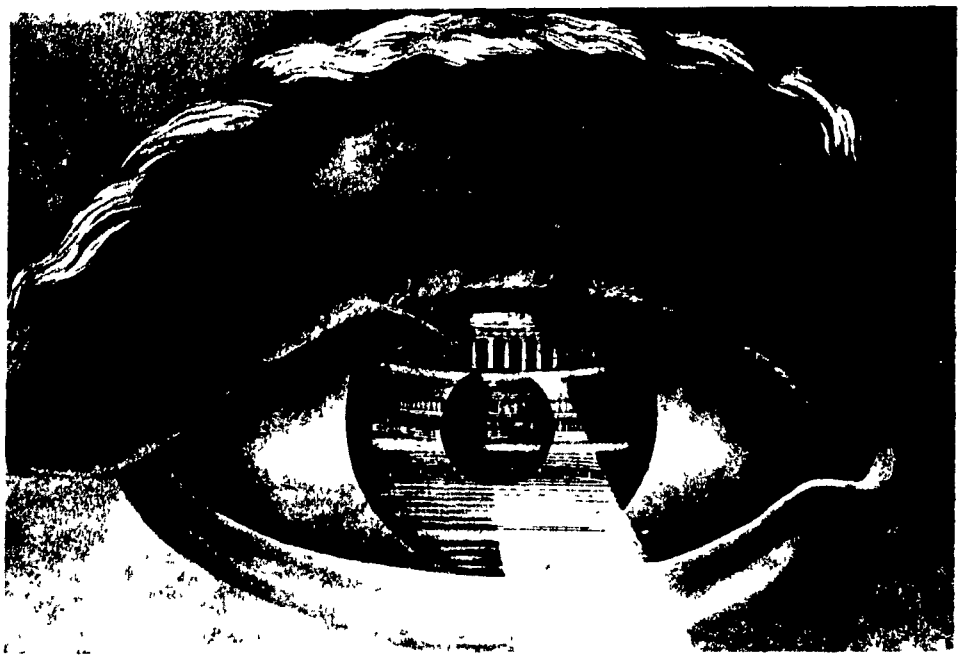
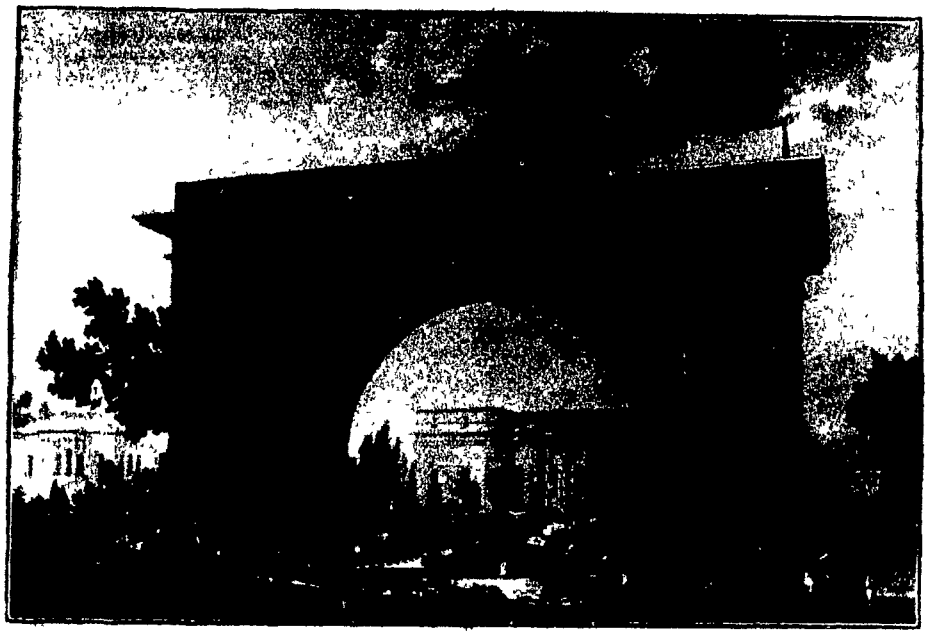
12. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Coup d'oeil" (Théatre de Besançon), plate 113, L'architecture..., Vol. I, 1804.

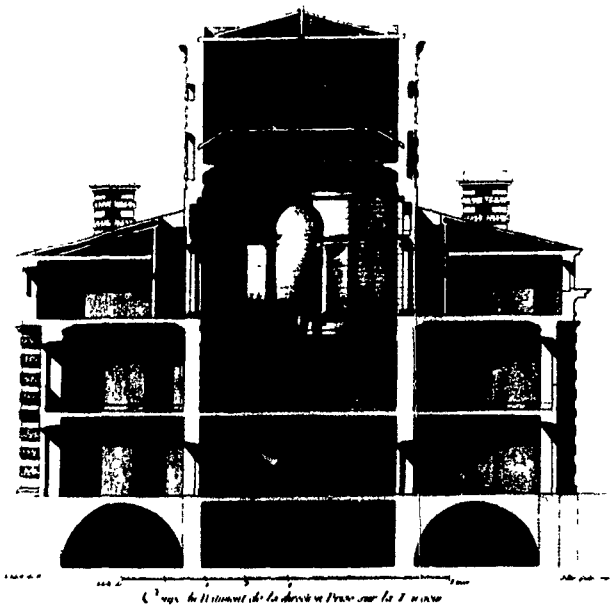




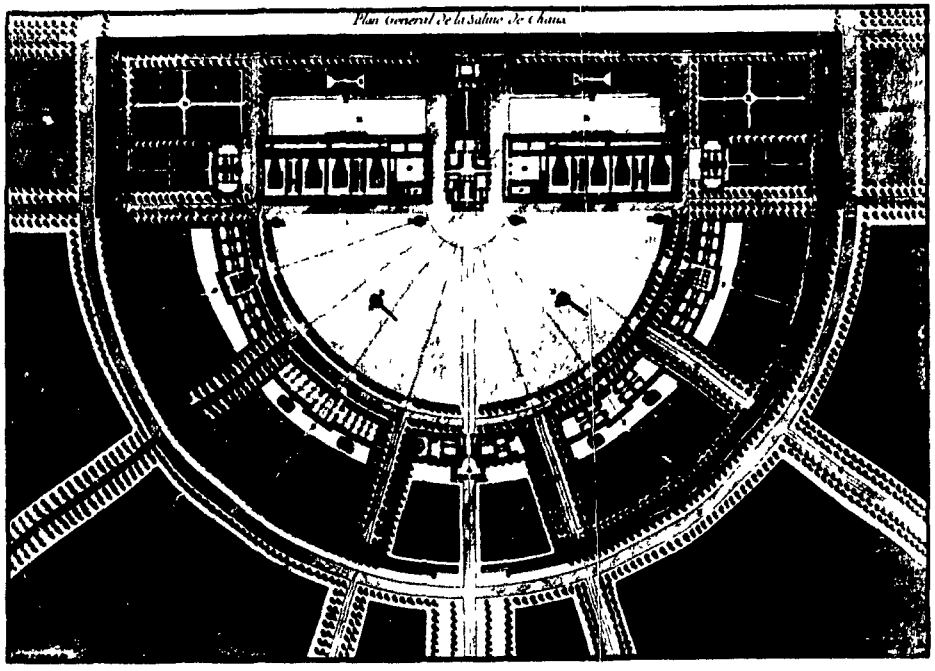
13. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Vue perspective de l'entrée de la maison de Madame de Thélusson," plate 238, L'architecture..., Vol. II, 1847.

14. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Élévation du Bâtiment de la Direction du côté de la grande cour," plate 61 (engraved by Sellier), L'architecture..., Vol. I 1804.

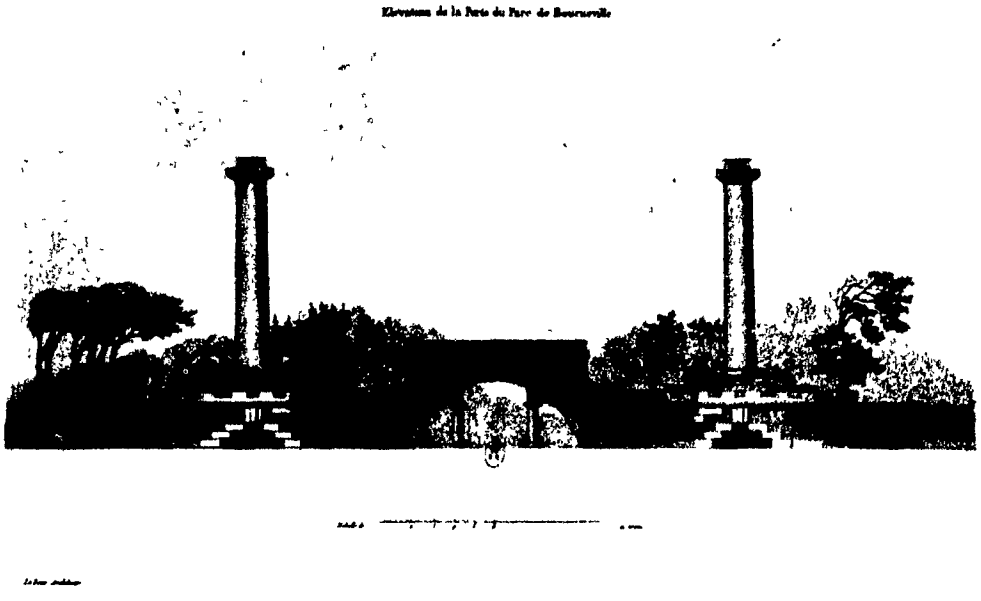
15. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Coupe du Bâtiment de la direction Prise sur la Largeur," plate 64 (engraved by Sellier, 1776), L'architecture..., Vol. I, 1804.



16. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Plan général de la Saline de Chaux, tel qu'il est exécuté," plate 16 (engraved by Sellier), L'architecture..., Vol. I, 1804.

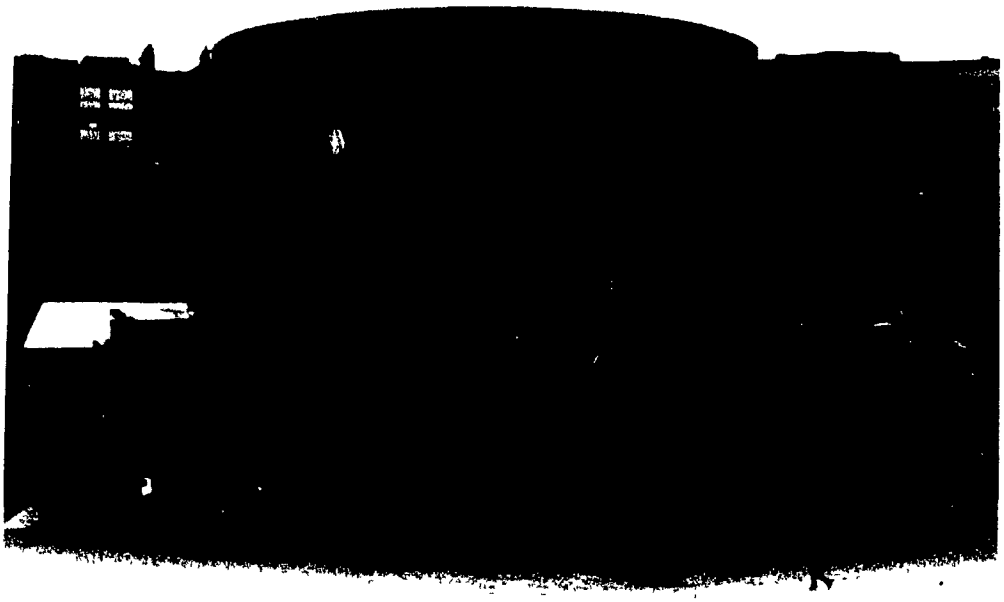


17. Julien-David Le Roy. "Reconstruction of the Propylaea," Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce, Paris, 1758.



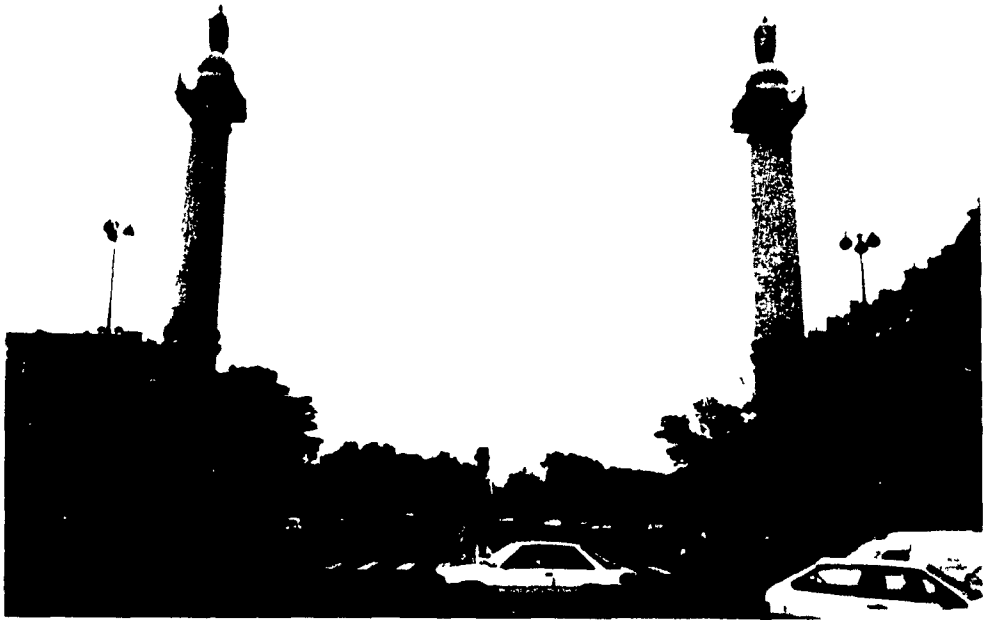
18. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Élévation de la Porte du Parc de Bourneville," plate 357 (engraved by N. Ransonnette), L'architecture..., Vol. II, 1847.

19. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Barrière de Chartres/Rotonde d'Orléans, 1783-1789. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.



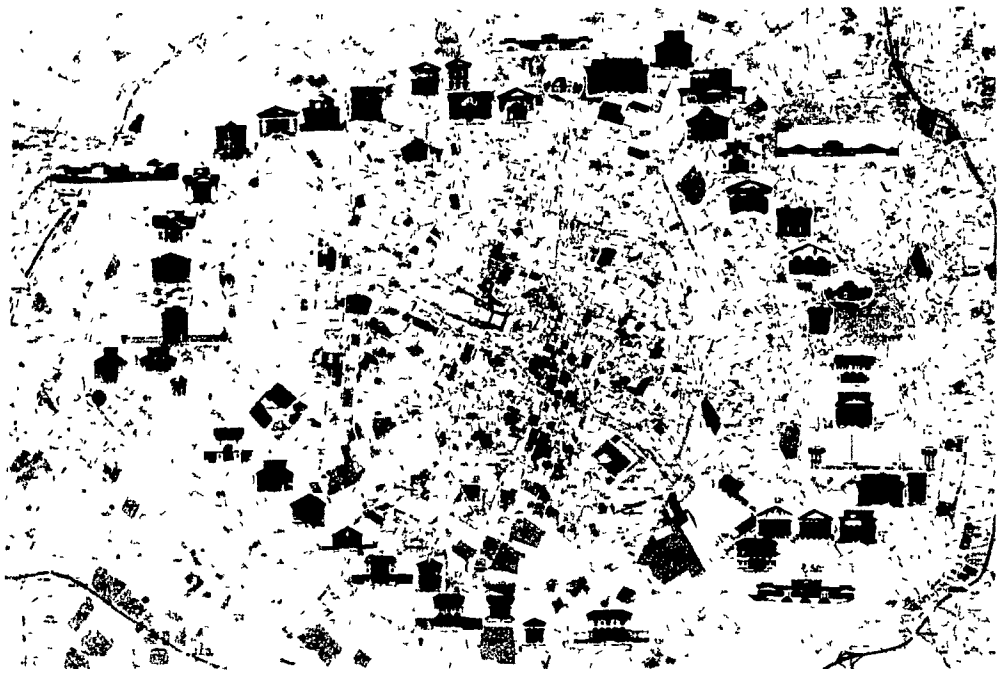
20. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Barrière de Pantin/Rotonde de la Villette, 1783-1789. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.

21. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Bureaux de la route de Vincennes/Bureau du Trône, 1783-1789. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.



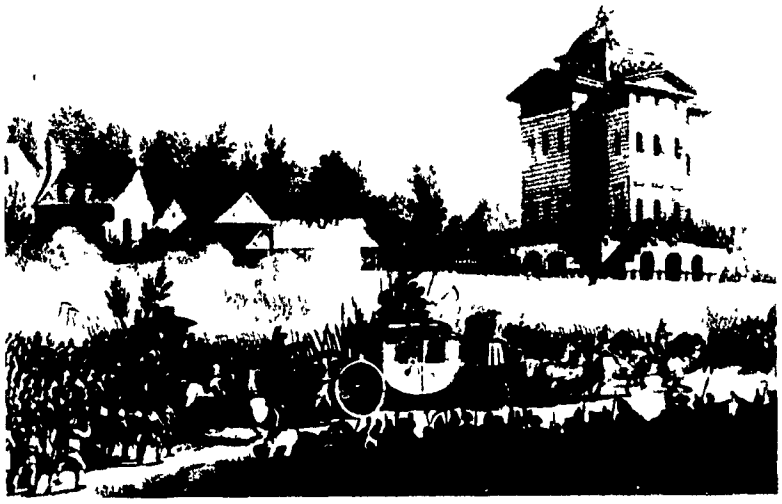
22. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Bureau de la rue d'Orléans/Barrière d'Enfer, 1783-1789. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.

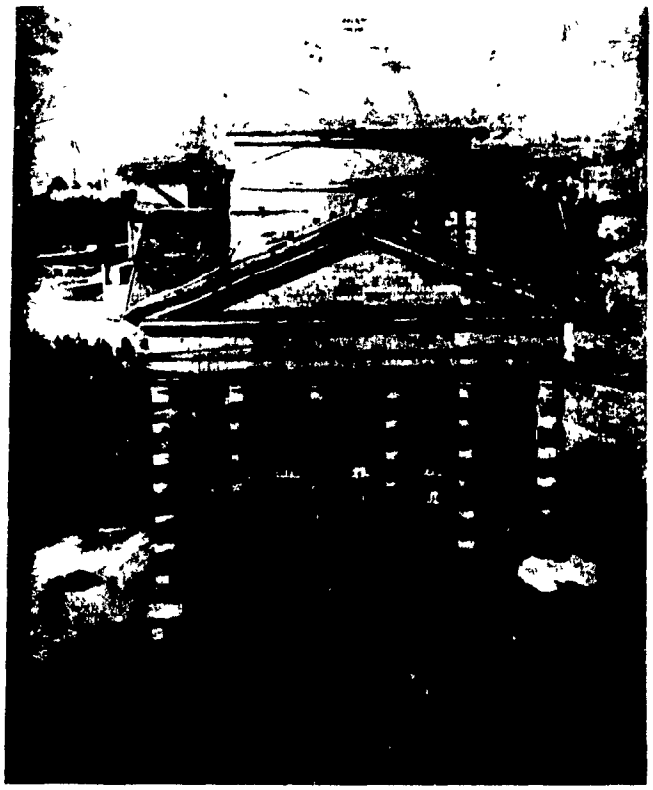
23. Modern map of Paris showing the locations and facades of the Propylaea (Elevations: Saint-Victor).



24. Anonymous. <u>View of the Bureau de Passy</u>, c. 1800.

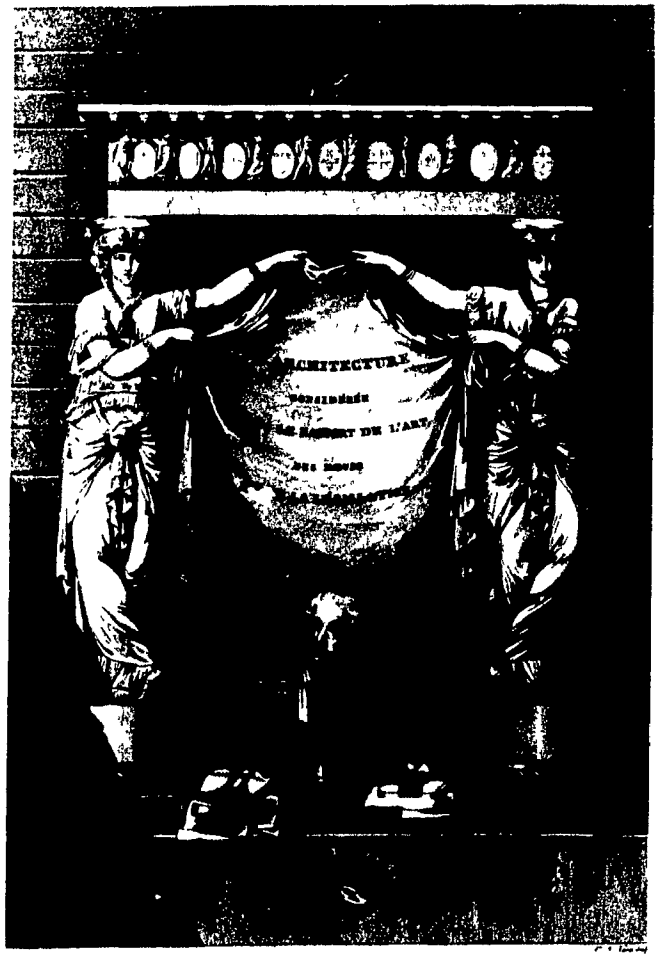
25. Engraving after J.-L. Prieur. Le retour de Varennes.





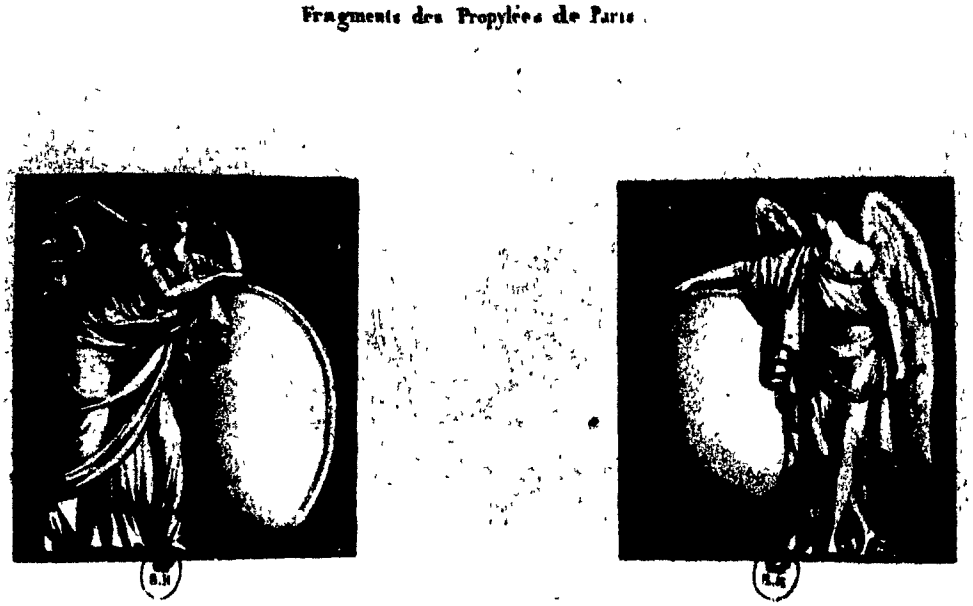
26. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Bureau de l'Étoile, 1783-1789.
Daguerreotype by Anton Melling, 1848.

27. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Frontispiece (engraved by Charles-Nicolas Varin), L'architecture..., Vol. I, 1804.



28. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Frieze of the Barrière d'Enfer. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.

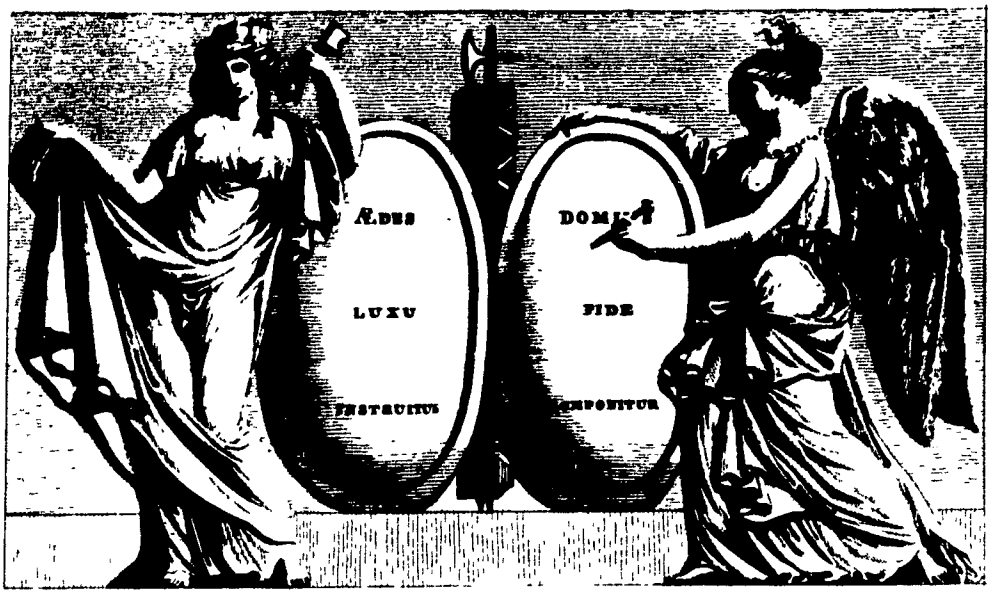
29. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragments des Propylées de Paris," plate 160, L'architecture..., Vol II, 1847.

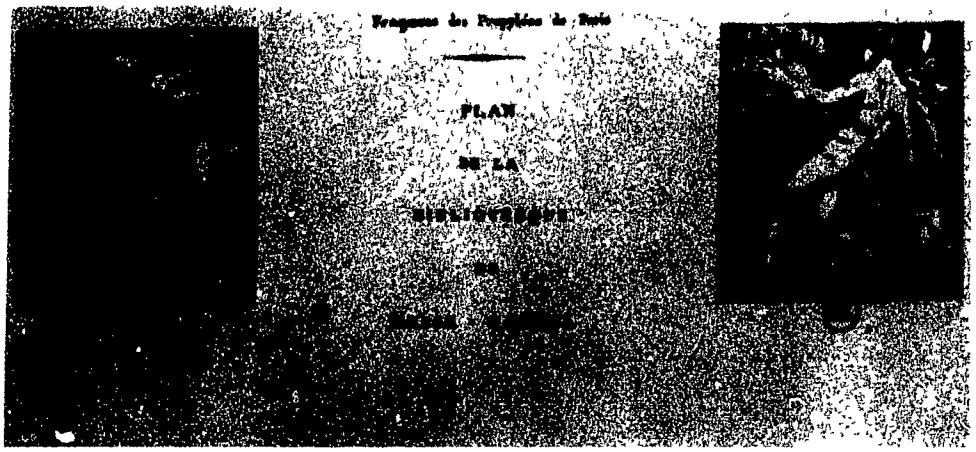


30. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragments des Propylées de Paris," plate 77 (engraved by Coiny), L'architecture..., Vol. I, 1804.

31. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragment des Propylées de Paris," plate 93 (engraved by Varin), L'architecture..., Vol I, 1804.

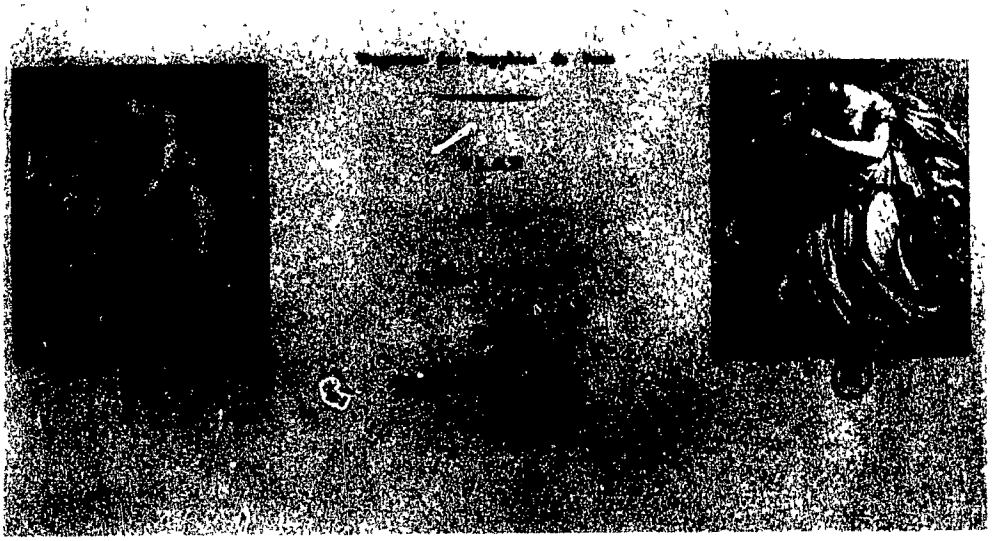
FRAGMENT DES PROPYLÉES DE PARIS.

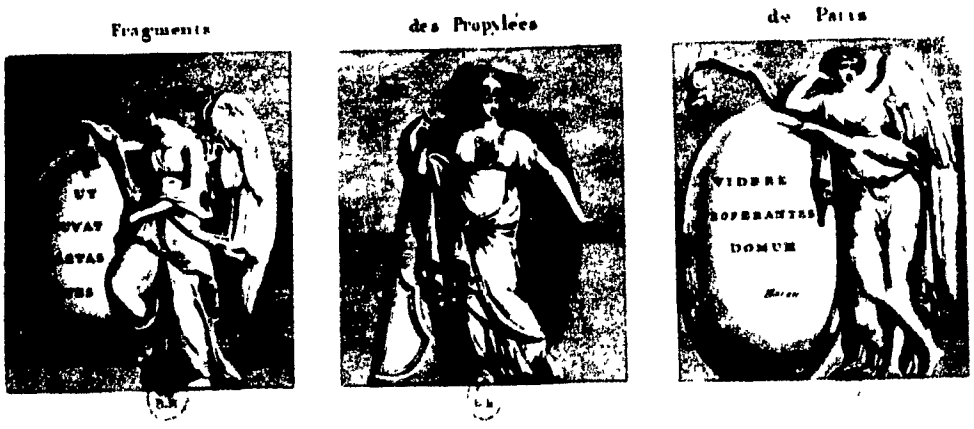




32. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragmens des Propylées de Paris," plate 204, L'architecture..., Vol. II, 1847.

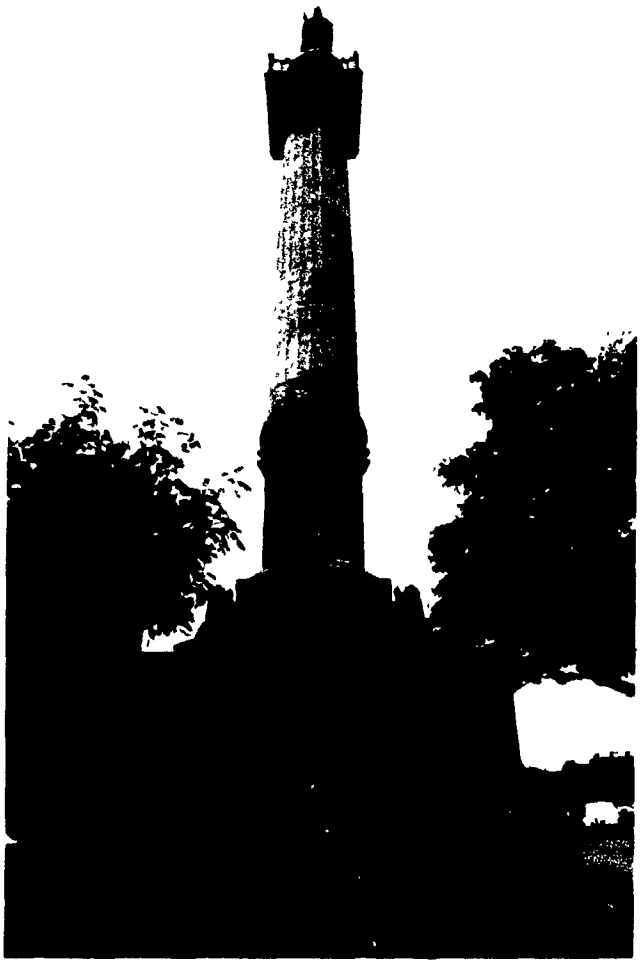
33. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragmens des Propylées de Paris," plate 205, L'architecture..., Vol II, 1847.





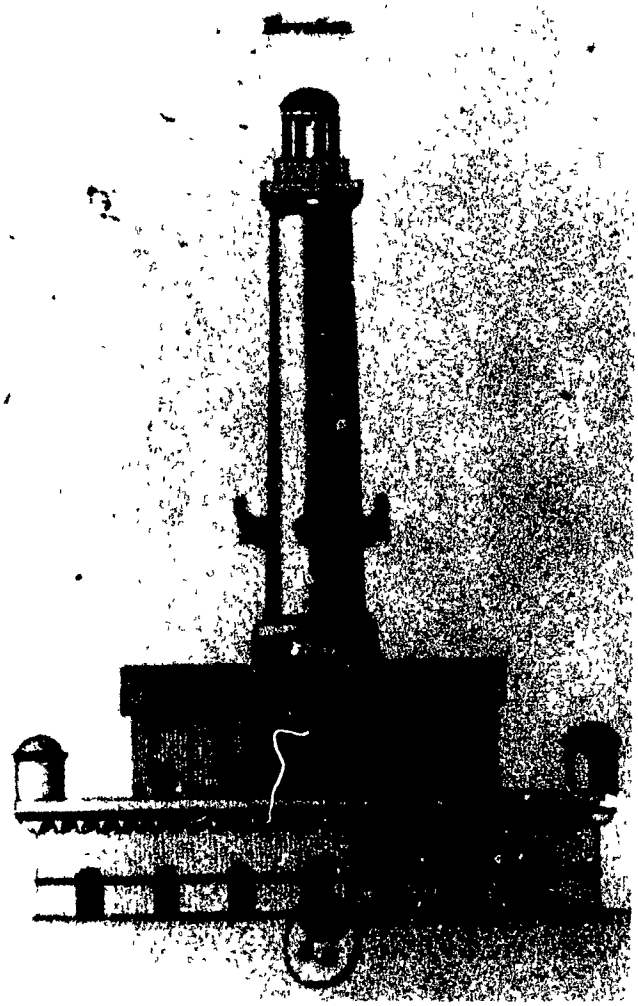
34. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Fragments des Propylées de Paris," plate 360, L'architecture..., Vol II, 1847.

35. Bureau du Trône, detail of a column. Photograph by Donigan Cumming, 1990.



36. Le Campion (les frères) et Joseph-Alexandre, le fils. "Vue de la Nouvelle Barrière du Trône," Planche No. 99, Vues Pittoresques des principaux Édifices de Paris, 1789.

37. Courvoisier, View of the Bureau du Trône, n.d., engraving.



38. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. "Projet III d'une barrière," plate 157 (engraved by Van Maelle), L'architecture..., Vol. II, 1847.