RUIN IMAGERY AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF REGENERATION IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH ART

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
1977

APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: Ruin Imagery and the Iconography of Regeneration in Eighteenth Century French Art

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Date Approved: April 28, 1976

ABSTRACT

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While the extraordinary popularity of ruin imagery in eighteenth century France is well known to art historians, it has remained a largely unstudied, and thus misunderstood, cultural phenomenon. The profusion of ruin pictures and ruinous garden pavilions during the Enlightenment is generally interpreted as symptomatic of the emotional febrility and escapist perversity of a society bogged down in decadence. The popularity of ruins as motifs of interior decoration is taken as proof of the reign of rococo frivolity.

The present study seeks to bring into focus how eighteenth century artists, connoisseurs and writers themselves felt about their ruin imagery. This examination is called for because the evidence of documents, literary sources and the art itself overwhelmingly suggests that ruins were considered to be symbolic of nature's regenerative vitality and wholesomeness. To the contemporary viewer, therefore, the experience of a ruin was an antidote to, not a symptom of, social and personal lethargy.

Early signs of the new iconographical trends appear in the art of students at the French Academy in Rome and were probably influenced by the commitments to ecclesiastical and cultural reform expressed by Italian ruinists associated with

the academy. Ruins had a longstanding association in visual imagery and literature with the contemplative life, intellectual insights and poetic inspiration; in the eighteenth century, to frequent ruin settings implied a rejection of hypocrisy, pomposity and spiritual complacency.

In France, catastrophes, urban renewal projects and the Revolution created "fresh" ruins which, even more poignantly than ancient ruins, illustrated the transience of life. Images of these modern ruins clearly embodied the unstable blend of anxiety, excitement, hope and resignation with which French society watched the shirlwind of change sweeping their country toward the year 1800.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The most substantial chapter of this thesis, the one dealing with "fresh" ruins, owes its original inspiration, and much of its orientation, to course lectures on eighteenth century art given by Dr. George Levitine in the Spring of 1972. As my thesis advisor, Dr. Levitine subsequently offered his expertise as a scholar, along with a great deal of needed encouragement, to the inestimable benefit of the result of my research. The other members of my committee, Dr. Alain De Leiris and Dr. Elizabeth Johns, made valuable suggestions regarding style and content of the final draft.

Since Hubert Robert is the most prominent single artist considered in this study, it is with very special pleasure and gratitude that I acknowledge the assistance and attention so kindly offered to me by Jean Cailleux and the staff of the galérie Cailleux during a brief visit to Paris in July, 1975. Scholar, connoisseur and "dean" of a large number of amateurs of Hubert Robert, Monsieur Cailleux provided documentation from his personal archives that could have taken me literally years to gather otherwise. Even more remarkably, he did so despite serious reservations about my interpretation of Robert's later ruin paintings.

During the last stages of production, order began to emerge out of chaos only when my wife, Barbara, volunteered to assume great portions of the secretarial burden. Her sense

of grammatical logic enabled me, furthermore, to untwist a good deal of convoluted verbiage. The intelligibility of the final draft is to a great extent due to her help. A final word of thanks goes to a very dear friend, Helene Mc Cue, who consented to forgo the comforts of semi-retirement to see that her adopted nephew's thesis got careful final typing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Dimensions are given in centimeters unless otherwise noted. Height precedes width.

13. Claude-Louis Chatelet. Artist sketching with the abbé de Saint-Non. Ink and watercolor on paper, 8 3/16 X 6 7/8 in. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.

14. François Boucher. Landscape with a watermill, 1743. Oil on canvas, 36 X 47 in. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle.

15. Charles-Louis Clérisseau. Design for the Ruin Room at Trinità dei Monti, Rome, design executed in 1766. Drawing. Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

16. Anon. Frontispiece of I Dieci Libri Dell'Architettura di M. Vitruvio. Tradutti et Commentati da Monsignor Barbaro... Venice, 1556.

17. Simon Vouet. Allegory of the Human Soul, ca. 1625. Oil on canvas, 179 X 144. Capitoline Museum, Rome.

18. Drawing by Augustin de Saint-Aubin, engraved by Fessard. Interior of the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, Paris, 1759. Bibliothèque Nationale, Est.

19. Joseph Vernet. Shipwreck, ca. 1740. Oil on canvas, 87.5 X 165. Coll. of the Earl of Elgin, Scotland

20. Hubert Robert. Ruins of a Roman temple, ca. 1780. Oil on canvas. Musée Calvet, Avignon.

21. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Parc Monceau, 1778. Oil on canvas. Whereabouts unknown.

22. Drawing for a column-shaped residence, built in 1771. Désert de Retz, near Chambourcy, France.

23. View of the Gothic Fortress in the Parc de Betz. Engraving from Alexandre de La Borde, Description des nouveaux jardins de France.

24. François Boucher. Design for a Diploma for the Freemasons of Bordeaux, ca. 1765. Brush and oils on heavy paper, 39.1 X 27. Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund.

25. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain after the fire of 1762. Gouache. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

26. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain after the fire of 1762. Gouache. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

27. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Six views of the ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain, 1762. Etching.

28. Detail of figure 27.

29. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Demolition of Saint-Jean-en-Grève with Saint-Gervais in the background, ca. 1800. Oil on canvas. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

30. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Clearing of the Louvre Colonnade, ca. 1758. Oil on canvas, 38.5 X 59.5. Louvre, Paris.

31. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Clearing of the Louvre Colonnade, 1764. Oil on canvas, 41 X 51.3. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

32. Giovanni-Battista Panini. A Caprice with Ruins, 1720. Oil on canvas, 47 X 56 in. Sotheby auction, London, 22 February 1967.

33. Drawing by Eisen, engraved by Le Bas. Frontispiece of La Font de Saint-Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état présent de la Peinture en France, Nouv. éd. cor. et augm., Paris, 1752.

34. Drawing by Francois Blondel, engraved by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Demolition of houses in the Cour Carré and restoration of the west façade of the east wing of the Louvre, ca. 1755. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

35. Engraving after Carmontelle. Portrait of Louis Petit de Bachaumont, 1761. Bibliothèque National, Est.

36. Hubert Robert. Artist drawing in ruins, 1786. Watercolor, 70 X 98. Louvre, Paris.

37. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the slaughterhouse of the Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, after the fire of 1772. Counterproof in sanguine, 28.8 X 36.5. Musee Carnavalet, Paris.

38. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the Salle du Légat of the Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, after the fire of 1772. Pen, bistre washes and gouache, 35 X 24.6. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

39. Hubert Robert. Versailles. Demolition of the Bassin d'Apollon in 1775. Oil on canvas, 124 X 191. Musée de Versailles, Versailles.

40. Hubert Robert. Versailles. The Tapis Vert during the replanting of trees in 1774-1775. Oil on canvas, 124 X 191. Musee de Versailles, Versailles.

41. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the Palais-Royal Opera House after the fire of 1781. Oil on canvas, 85 X 104. Musee de l'Opera, Paris.

42. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the houses on the Pont au Change in 1788. Oil on canvas, 86 X 159. Musee Carnavalet, Paris.

43. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the houses on the Pont Notre-Dame in 1786. Oil on canvas, 86.5 X 159.5. Musee Carnavalet, Paris.

44. Balthazar Dunker, illustrator. Frontispiece of Tableau de Paris, ou Explication de Différentes Figures gravées à l'eau forte, pour servir aux différentes Editions du Tableau de Paris, par M. Mercier. Paris: Yverdon, 1787.

45. Hubert Robert. The Bastille in the first days of its demolition, 1789. Oil on canvas, 77 X 114. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

46. Anon. Allegory of the Revolution, ca. 1790. Oil on canvas. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

47. Hubert Robert. Grand Gallery of the Louvre imagined in ruins, 1790. Oil on canvas, 115 X 145. Private collection, U.S.A.

48. Hubert Robert. Grand Gallery of the Louvre imagined renovated as a public museum, 1790. Oil on canvas, 115 X 145. Private collection, U.S.A.

49. Hubert Robert. Desecration of the Royal Tombs of Saint-Denis in 1793. Oil on canvas, 54 X 64. Musee Carnavalet, Paris.

50. Hubert Robert. Artist in his cell at Sainte-Pélagie Prison, 1793. Wash drawing, 22.7 X 32.7. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

51. Hubert Robert. Demolition of Saint-Jean-en-Grève, 1797-1800. Oil on canvas, 62 X 53.5. Musee Carnavalet, Paris.

52. Hubert Robert. Demolition of Saint-Sauveur, ca. 1785. Oil on canvas, 87 X 69. Moscow Art Museum, U.S.S.R.

53. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Demolition of the Church of the Saints-Innocents, 1787. Oil on canvas. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

54. Sarrasin. Demolition of the church of the Collège des Bernardins, ca. 1797. Drawing on paper. Bibliothèque Nationale, Est.

55. Laglumé. Demolition of Saint-André-des-Arcs, ca. 1800. Lithograph. Bibliothèque Nationale, Est.

56. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the Church of the Feuillants, ca. 1804. Oil on canvas, 137 X 104.5. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

57. Hubert Robert. Chapel of the Sorbonne imagined in ruins, ca. 1804. Oil on canvas. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

58. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the Church of the Saints-Innocents, ca. 1787. Oil on canvas. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle.

INTRODUCTION

Among the major categories of visual imagery, ruins have been the subject of one of the most persistent and pervasive taboos. Decaying architecture has never gained total respectability as material for artistic representation. Contemplation of ruins arouses suspicions of perversity or cruelty however attractive the ruin may be. Even Henry James, a most lucid observer of the psychological paradoxes of western man, betrayed a typically uneasy and ambivalent attitude toward ruin sensibility. "To delight in the aspects of sentient ruin might appear a heartless pastime," he wrote, "and the pleasure, I confess, shows the note of perversity."[1] Because western ideals, inherited from classical Greece, place stability, durability and unity on a special pedestal of value, the pleasure of contemplating architecture in dissolution, although almost universally enjoyed, remains nevertheless a universal subject of embarrassment.

The eighteenth century had an absolutely extraordinary fondness for ruins and ruin imagery and it is not surprising that the period has been both openly and implicitly berated for it ever since.[2] Eighteenth century studies have customarily interpreted the popularity of ruins in demeaning or sensationalized ways: as either an exemplification of Rococo capriciousness or a symptom of the febrile escapism of melan-

cholic, thrill-seeking aristocrats. The existence of vast numbers of ruin images in paintings, prints and decorative schemes has never really been a subject of serious inquiry, a fact which suggests that, by force of sheer quantity, ruin imagery has been presumed to be void of meaningful iconography. Pictorial clichés executed by rote did, of course, appear in abundance; yet it can be demonstrated that throughout the century ruins retained a serious symbolic appeal to artists and connoisseurs alike.

A fruitful examination of the evidence of ruin sensibility in French literature from the Renaissance to Romanticism has recently been published by Roland Mortier.[3] His study touches on every significant facet of meaning associated with the use of ruins as a motif of verbal expression in the eighteenth century and presents a wealth of superbly chosen and analyzed illustrative texts. His judgments regarding the general development of the ruin theme will doubtlessly prove all but definitive over the years, but at the same time, the strictly literary character of his approach underlines the need for a companion study from the perspective of art history. Mortier as much as acknowledges this need himself in regard to the awakening of ruin sensibility in the sixteenth century when, as he recognizes, the visual expression of the ruin theme seems to have preceded or at least developed contemporaneously with the literary.[4] In the eighteenth century, the role of the visual arts was certainly a no less significant factor in the emerging awareness of ruinous beauty. The very word "picturesque", so often used to describe the

literary effects achieved by Diderot, Rousseau, Delille, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and other writers dealing with ruin imagery, indicates that their efforts were aimed at expressing feelings which pictures had already embodied in illusionistic terms. It is, moreover, no coincidence that the most important literary reflections on the phenomenon of architectural ruin appeared either in art criticism, such as Diderot's Salons, or other forms of art-related prose and poetry such as the abbé Delille's Les Jardins and Cérutti's Les Jardins de Betz.

That a strong tradition of ruin imagery in the plastic arts should appear along with and actively encourage a parallel literary development is not at all difficult to understand on principle. Ruins, as Mortier's study makes manifestly obvious, have maintained a place in the repertory of artistic and literary themes primarily because of their admirable visual features. Renaissance humanists alluded to the vestiges of ancient architecture in their hymns to Roman grandeur because they had been moved by looking at them. Even the moralizing clergy, while indicting the vanities of man through reference to the spoiled monuments of paganism, paid tribute, though unconsciously, to the visual appearance of the ruins. Roman antiquities made superlative vanitàs emblems because even in their "deplorable state" they were clearly vestiges of superlative architectural creation. A ruin that was unimpressive could no more serve as an effective vanitàs motif than it could as a reminder of ancient genius.

Classical and Christian intellectual traditions continued nevertheless to inhibit the ability of writers to discover and appreciate the beauty of ruined buildings.[5] Painters, however, perhaps because they were less tutored and less burdened by professional traditions regarding subject matter, appear to have been able to transmit the aesthetic pleasures of ruins with little restraint since the mid-sixteenth century. Drawings of Roman monuments such as Martin Heemskerck's might indeed be valuable as accurate archaeological documentation, but there can be no doubt that the artist and his patrons found the ruins beautiful in themselves. One has only to look at the drawings themselves (fig. 1) to see that, though the artist was perhaps dwelling on the past, he had also discovered evocatively beautiful objects. Heemskerck even anticipated the eighteenth century custom of depicting an artist sketching the ruins in situ (fig. 2). Perhaps an advertisement for the authenticity of his ruin imagery, it was also a tribute to the absorbing interest that ruins held for artists, however oblivious literary classicists may have remained to their appeal.

The problems encountered in the art history of ruin sensibility are not, therefore, concerned with determining when a heightened sensitivity to the beauty of dilapidated architecture first manifested itself. Roman mural paintings suggest that it happened as early as the Augustan period. Instead, the problem is to explain which intellectual, cultural and historical pressures gave ruin paintings a sufficiently urgent appeal at certain times so that the tradition-

al taboos against the idea of ruinous beauty could be challenged and transcended. The eighteenth century was such a time. The changes in ruin imagery of this period did not occur because of a loss of iconographical force but, to the contrary, because of developments in ideas and current events whose significance could be translated into pictures of architectural transience. To Diderot, the literary source of la poétique des ruines, and to many of his contemporaries, the fate of ruined buildings suggested the existence of vital forces in nature which were considered the source of society's, and the individual's, vitality. The ruin became an emblem of progress, of "creative destruction" (to borrow a term from the economist Joseph Schumpeter) in a world whose institutions seemed to have ceased to function and whose psychic health was believed in peril.

CHAPTER II

ROME AND FRENCH RUIN PAINTERS AT MID-CENTURY

The city of Rome and Italian schools of painting exerted a powerful influence on French ruin imagery in the eighteenth century as they had since the Renaissance, but the influence took various forms, some less obvious than others. The most notable stimulus in the age of the Enlightenment was perhaps the market for veduti which tourists bought as souvenirs of their stay in the Eternal City. A large portion of these were supplied by students and teachers at the French Academy such as Hubert Robert, Jean-Laurent Le Geay and Charles-Louis Clérisseau. Veduti with ruins had appeared as early as the sixteenth century - those, for example, of late Renaissance "Romanists" like Etienne Du Pérac (fig. 3), and seventeenth century classicists like Claude Lorrain (fig. 4) - so the genre was in no way new, just the number of specialists practicing it. The quantity of production in the eighteenth century might suggest that ruin images had become little more than deluxe postcards acquired for the sake of archeological curiosity or sentimentality, but to dismiss them as decoration or topographical records, void of iconographical significance, is to ignore an important issue in the history of taste.[6]

The trip to Rome was a sort of humanist pilgrimage whose memories had a special importance. The ruins of Rome stood as symbolic exemplars of nobility: their beauty had transcended the adversities of fate and they embodied the spirit of a period of history which had enjoyed unrivalled political strength and genius.[7] More than ever, the ruins were seen in the eighteenth century as quasi-religious relics; that is as material links with the past which produced salutary effects on the psyche of the beholder through visual and sensuous experience.[8] Even though, as Mortier points out, their appeal was theoretically attributed to the ideality of the original building, not to the ruined condition, the fact remains that the contemplation of ruins and ruin imagery had come to be considered healthy, or at least worthwhile.[9] The wholesomeness of the experience was so accepted that one of the most industrious men of the eighteenth century, the duc de Choiseul, Louis XV's minister of state and a former ambassador to Rome, had ruin paintings by Robert hanging on the walls of his study in proximity to a portrait of the king (fig. 5). Choiseul thereby affirmed his dual loyalty: to France, and to the lofty principles of stoic humanism inherited from Antiquity and embodied in the ruins.[10]

Favorable conditions in the art market, however, only partially account for the phenomenal outpouring of ruin imagery in Rome by mid-century. The independent motivation of artists requires comment too. The intense atmosphere of architectural innovation at the French Academy of Rome about 1750 has received considerable attention over the past few

decades since it was first discovered to have engendered the so-called "revolutionary" architectural style later developed by Boullée and Ledoux.[11] In all likelihood, the high-minded seriousness and sense of purpose which fostered the revolution in building concepts also encouraged ruin sensibility.

The link between the two activities is not one of formal similarity but instead of shared impetus. Ruinists and architects were both concerned about what appeared to be a weakening of creative drive in France and their reformatory zeal encouraged both grandiose architectural visions and study of ruins. Interestingly many of the young architects themselves did ruin pictures having little archeological or technical value. The picturesque views of decrepit structures done, for example, by Le Geay (fig. 6), Clérisseau (fig. 7) and, later, Pierre-Adrien Pâris (fig. 8), among many others, prove that the pleasures of a belle ruine had been reconciled with the seriousness of one's calling as an architect. There is reason to believe, in fact, that ruins had acquired widely understood iconographic connections with causes of institutional and social reform early in the century, which would have given them special importance as subject matter for study by enthusiastic students.

Italian ruin painters must be briefly discussed to explain the connection. Venetians like the Tiepolo family contributed to the popularity of the genre of ruin painting in the early years of the century, but closer to the French Academy were the ruinists Giambattista Piranesi and Gian Paolo Panini.[12] Both worked literally in the shadow of An-

tiquity and perhaps for that reason showed a particularly marked awareness of the cultural decline of their country. Each in his own way appears to have been seriously committed to cultural and social reform, and because of their close personal and professional ties with the French Academy, their artistic crusade was doubtlessly known by the heady youths in the Palazzo Mancini.

The emotional and formal power of Piranesi's ruin imagery has been acclaimed since his own day, but it is crucial to understand his motives to do ruin imagery in the first place. Abundant evidence is available regarding Piranesi's dissatisfaction with contemporary Roman society. An architect by training, he once attributed his work as a print maker to his need for a surrogate activity in a period of mediocrity such as his own.[13] Numerous statements make it evident, moreover, that he considered the drift of contemporary taste towards meticulous Neo-classicism as inimical to creativity.[14] It is well known that he used ruin imagery as a means of propagandizing the greatness and aesthetic primacy of native Etruscan art, in opposition to the theories of Winckelmann, LeRoy and circles of hellenophiles throughout Europe.[15] But his polemics were aimed at a second, larger audience as well: his fellow countrymen. By demonstrating the infinite superiority of their forbears, Piranesi hoped to belittle the pettiness of contemporary life in Rome (fig.9). Frustrated social critics in the eighteenth century often called upon heroes of the past to reproach modern day corruption and to edify the enlightened. Voltaire, for example,

brought back Henry IV and Louis XIV to witness the sterility of their country under the regime of Louis XV.[16] Being an architect, Piranesi naturally summoned ancient architects and the visible testaments to their genius. His imagery was in essence no more escapist than Voltaire's historical studies since it was as involved with reform as the pamphlets of any Parisian philosophe.[17]

Panini, a professor of perspective at the academy, likewise used ruins in ways that suggest a concern for social and religious reform. His ruin pictures with philosophers expounding or early Christian apostles preaching (figs. 10, 11) are not fully explainable in traditional iconographical terms. Renaissance precedence suggested noble architectural settings such as that found in Raphael's School of Athens. The Baroque period maintained this tradition of relating wisdom to orderly, lofty structures. Panini's choice of setting might be explained as a device to set off by contrast the presence of a philosophical or spiritual leader who, figuratively speaking, transcends the state of ruin. This explanation is unsatisfying, however, first because the central figure does not overpower the scene, and secondly, because the fragmented architecture is handsome in detail, monumental and not apparently degraded. In these pictures, philosophy does not symbolically transcend nature, nor does religion triumph over paganism. To the contrary, the relationship of central figure to setting is one of harmony, an interrelationship which yields the true meaning of the images.

Presumably both philosopher and apostle are meant to

have willingly chosen to expound in a ruin setting, which means that Panini felt a ruin setting could symbolize truths not apparent in a building intact. Traditional humanistic themes readily explain the symbolism. The monumental beauty of the ruin complements the moral strength of the philosophers whose virtue will also endure the ravages of time. The ruin setting is also an unpretentious one, implying a simplicity of spirit - a sort of fundamentalism - on the part of men endowed with wisdom which renders them aloof from the pompous grandeur of established church architecture and ceremony. In its simplicity and relative closeness to nature, such a ruin setting is the urban approximation of a forest scene. Finally, since such a setting is a-historical - neither Paul nor any pagan philosophers expostulated among ruins - the event is related as a timeless one. The artist was not expressing nostalgia for an irretrievable past but instead seems to have been moved to express a vision of timeless moral fortitude germinating, or re-germinating, in the ruins.[18]

To recognize the reformatory urges implicit in images of this kind is to understand the roots of eighteenth century Neo-classicism. The movement began as an antidote to tendencies of mediocrity and decadence and it sought ultimate regeneration of society and art through absorption of the spirit of Antiquity. Its conception was not without mystical overtones.[19] The moralizing tenor of Panini's ruin pictures reflects an interest in ruins divorced to a new degree from archaeology. Together with Piranesi he may be said to have initiated the sub-genre of "inspirational" as opposed to

"antiquarian" ruins.

The spiritual connotation of the word "inspirational" makes it an especially apt label for the new kind of ruin painting done in eighteenth century Rome. Artists since Antiquity have frequently indicated their sources of inspiration in self-portraits - Saint Luke painting the Virgin, the artist and his model, etc. - and many French artists in Rome, like Heemskerck before them, left numerous sketches of themselves raptly absorbed in the study of ruins. While capricci often depicted connoisseurs idly sightseeing on the Grand Tour, drawings like Hubert Robert's Artist sketching an urn in front of the Coliseum (fig. 12), or Claude-Louis Chatelet's Artist sketching with Abbé de Saint-Non (fig. 13), present men working in earnest. These men had a sense of mission and enthusiasm for ruins which should not be confused with the playfulness of much Rococo decorative imagery in the North. While in Paris, Boucher (fig. 14) might have set the Temple of the Sybil from Tivoli next door to a Flemish barnyard to delight Parisian tastes for the picturesque, in Rome, ruin imagery was serious business.

A stumbling block to a full appreciation of ruin imagery of this period has been the fact that ruins often figured as motifs in interior decoration. Here an exception must be made to the deadly truism of art history that holds that decorative art must always be void of iconographical significance. A single exception will prove the point - the ruin decor designed by Clérisseau in the convent Trinità dei Monti in Rome (fig. 15).

When Thomas McCormick and John Fleming first published this ruin room in 1962, they reached a brilliant conclusion, though facetiously, in suggesting that Winckelmann, who admired the room, might have enjoyed such a study for himself since he "would doubtless have found it an inspiring atmosphere in which to write his Versuch einer Allegorie besonders fur die Kunst of 1766".[20] It is safe to say that, indeed, he would have. Contemporary documents discovered by McCormick and Fleming state that the room was in fact a study, furnished with a desk in the form of a sarcophagus, with niches for books and with furniture "d'un nouveau genre" (presumably a l'antique). Also found was a Hermitage drawing of the room on which Clérisseau had written that it was meant to represent "le débris d'un temple antique dont on suppose qu'un hermite a voulu faire son habitation".[21] The men who commissioned the room, Pères Jacquier and Lesueur, although very studious, were hardly quaint hermits. Both were intellectuals and Newton scholars who played host to nearly every intelligent visitor to Rome.[22] The ruin decor seems, therefore, to have been a joke, all the more humorous in that hermits really did inhabit various ruin sites around the city. The humor, though, was neither as self-denigrating nor silly as it might at first seem.

Any visitor aware of the current interest in Neo-classicism and to some degree acquainted with the deistic persuasion of Newton scholars in general, would have quickly understood his hosts' astute conceit: the simulated ruin was a sort of deistic chapel.[23] The durability of antique beauty

in the midst of material decay was reassurance that underlying the flux of empirical phenomena was a divine order whose beauty could be perceived by a cultured sensitivity. The beauty of a ruin was ideologically appealing to deists because of its freedom from association with dogma of any kind: a ruined temple, reclaimed by nature, was neigher pagan nor Christian. It was a testament to genius of a higher, non-denominational order. An environment of ruins, as suggested already in regard to pictures done by Piranesi and Panini, was believed to confer upon the willing soul a state of moral and intellectual grace. That it might also have provided sensuous pleasure in no way compromised its seriousness. Instead, it confirmed the belief widely held in the middle of the eighteenth century that the useful and the agreeable were ultimately reconcilable.

Informed intellectuals of Jacquier's and Lesueur's caliber surely knew the literary and artistic tradition of inspirational ruins to which their ruin room belonged. The history of the inspirational ruin stretches too far back in time to be fully dealt with here, but a few examples of the motif will be worthwhile studying so that persistent themes might stand out more clearly.

Petrarch, as Mortier notes, was astonishingly ahead of his time in the affection he displayed for ruins. The fourteenth century was a period during which the remains of the Forum were regarded with hostile contempt, superstition and fear, yet this poet fully appreciated the inspirational atmosphere of a ruin. As a young man, he frequently strolled

about or sat with friends among the vestiges of ancient Rome and there felt, as Mortier points out, a particular inclination to discuss history and philosophy. His liking for idle solitude among ruins is correctly interpreted by Mortier who notes that "Petrarch aime la vérité, non pas les sectes."[24] Like Jacquier and Lesueur, four hundred years later, Petrarch enjoyed contemplation amidst ruins because they were free from rigid doctrinal associations. He appears to have never sought the same kind of imaginative stimulation in the many magnificent Christian monuments of Europe although he held many of them in high regard.

For Petrarch, ruins were a place for a "promenade sans but", for repose and passive contemplation, not for study and work. Later scholars and artists do seem, however, to have mused upon the idea of setting up shop in the ruins. Notable evidence of this fantasy is the frontispiece to the 1556 edition of the Barbaro translation of I Dieci Libri Dell' Architettura di M. Vitruvio (fig. 16).[25] An architect-genius absorbed in contemplation of the geometry of the universe is seated in a ruin resembling the Coliseum. A complement of vanitas motifs lies about in disarray recalling sixteenth century melancholia emblems such as the famous print of Albrecht Dürer. As in melancholia imagery, the presence of musical instruments, the war machinery, the clock and other objects denoting active human endeavors emphasizes the aloofness of the contemplative genius from worldly concerns. Since this particular image is the frontispiece for an ancient treatise on architecture, it is unlikely, however,

that the ruin setting was meant as an object of disdain. It quite evocatively suggests, in fact, that meditation among the ruins would be particularly conducive to profound insights. The ruin, therefore, has inspirational overtones.

The cult of the genius, so important as an artistic credo in the sixteenth century, makes the absence of books from the work desk of this thinker a noteworthy detail. The genius works from direct inspiration in visual terms, not with the orderly, laborious method of the bookish scholar. His meditation among the ruins might be called an alternate route to wisdom and insight for those with visual aptitudes.

Ruins and elements of the grotesque were associated by certain late Renaissance and early Baroque artists and writers with unorthodox experiences leading to spiritual illumination. These trends are easily patronized as indulgence in perverse fantasy when in fact they represent an abiding tradition of, as yet, largely undecipherable mystical allegory based on experiences of altered states of consciousness. An intriguing instance of poetry which professed the belief that irrational visions revealed truths inaccessible to the scholarly intellect is Saint-Amant's famous poem, La Solitude, of 1624, where ruin imagery plays a major role.[26]

This poem epitomizes, and nearly caricatures by its extremism, the quest for insight through the visual experience of ruins and the macabre. Rich in murky images of ruined châteaux haunted by owls, bats and assorted creatures of the night, and spiced with terrifying details such as tombs, corpses and memories of physical violence - including suicide

- this orgy of the imagination justifies itself in the very last verse. Saint-Amant begins it:

> "O que j'aime la solitude!
> C'est l'élément des bons esprits,
> C'est par elle que j'ai compris
> L'art d'Apollon sans nulle étude, ..."[27]

He states that through solitude and its bizarre experiences the individual gains enlightenment without the dreariness of ordinary study: "l'art d'Apollon sans nulle étude". He considers his plunge into the macabre as a sign of a healthy mind; "C'est l'élément des bons esprits". In the remainder of the stanza, he implies that he seeks this kind of illumination for love of a muse:

> "Je l'aime (i.e. solitude) pour l'amour de toi,
> Connaissant que ton humeur l'aime,
> Mais quand je pense bien à moi
> Je la hais pour la raison même:
> Car elle pourrait me ravir
> L'heur de te voir et te servir."[28]

This poetic invocation of the muse is important because it implies modesty, even self-effacement, on the part of this habitué of ruin settings. He is attracted there, at least nominally, through self-renunciation for the sake of a higher truth symbolized by his muse. Thus while the ruin may be an "absence" in the eyes of worldly and literal thinkers, it is held by the visionary and the genius to have a wholesome effect on the psyche granting enlightenment.

The association of wisdom with a ruin setting appears again in the early seventeenth century in a canvas entitled Allegory of the Human Soul by Simon Vouet (fig. 17), where personifications of the intellectual faculties are seated in a nocturnal ruin.[29] Vouet's painting marks the official

appropriation and codification of a much older visionary metaphor. The ruin is no longer staffed with demons but with perfectly understandable figures right out of Césare Ripa's handbook of emblems. Key poetic elements nevertheless survived the alterations. The night atmosphere suggests that wisdom sees where others are blinded (in the dark), while the ruin refers to wisdom's remoteness from the world of human artifice, and being of indistinct age, to wisdom's timelessness.

When, therefore, Jacquier and Lesueur commissioned the ruin room, it was to present themselves as broadminded, unpretentious sages freed from the cosmetic superficialities of the ordinary world. They were classicist bohemians holding communion with a genus locus, the spirit of nature abiding in ruins. Newtonian physics had convinced them that empirical phenomena such as motion, time and decay could reveal ultimate truths to minds rightly attuned, and the ruin room was designed to be conducive to such a state of moral and intellectual well being. While the decor of Christian chapels traditionally referred to rebirth of the soul in a felicitous afterlife, the decor of the deist chapel celebrated a moral well being and freedom from human vanity to be attained in this life.

CHAPTER III

TIME, NATURE AND THE HOUSE OF MAN: THE PRE-ROMANTIC RUIN

Traditional reverence for classical art, together with the increased tourist travel by Frenchmen to Rome in the eighteenth century, only partly explain the phenomenal popularity of ruin imagery north of the Alps. The Age of Enlightenment displayed such an unusual affection for ruins that other factors were certainly involved. Emotional responses to the sight of decaying buildings were of such varied character and intensity that whatever thematic common denominators there may have been are discerned only with considerable effort. Sentiments ranged in degree of intensity from the gentle melancholy elicited by picturesque garden ruins to the terror and awe inspired by the gigantic visions of Hubert Robert's paintings.[30] By contrast, ruins of scenographic designs and decorative objects generally evoked a rococo spirit of childlike delight. If executed, however, in a more sober manner, as in Clérisseau's room at Trinità dei Monti, ruins could also evoke an atmosphere of serene and philosophical detachment. No simple iconographical formula existed.

The pictorial tradition of ruin imagery that was already established in France in the Renaissance survived into the eighteenth century and provides helpful interpretive clues.

Architecture has always symbolized the stabilizing elements of society and civilization, and since Graeco-Roman times men have found ruins of architecture expressive of the contigency and fallibility of the human condition.[31] Christianity adopted the motif as a symbol of the vanity and corruptibility of earthly existence, but as the tradition was bequeathed to the eighteenth century, it had taken on two distinct iconographical colorations.

First, the vanitàs ruin, because of its moral tenor, denoted a state of relative inferiority and corruption. It implied that ephemeral things should be disdained. The popularity of vanitàs imagery naturally suffered in the eighteenth century whose epicurean connoisseurs had little use of dogmatic moral concern regarding attachments to the goods of this world. But denunciations of materialism - a secular variation of the vanitàs theme - did occasionally occur in ruin imagery. The French bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century enjoyed unprecedented luxury, and many observers worried about its effects. The issue was debated by moralists and economists alike.[32] To some, luxury was inimical to the health and industry of the nation, while to others, it furnished the means to progress. Many of the philosophes, including Diderot, believed that the ease of contemporary living had debilitated the national spirit and promoted immorality among leaders who were bad examples for the lower classes.[33] The simple ideals of Diderot's drames bourgeois and Greuze's bourgeois genre scenes reflect this concern about rampant materialism. Certain ruin images suggest a similar yearning

for liberation from the emotional strains of luxury.

Even the ruin room of Pères Jacquier and Lesueur was in part a reaction against luxury as well as pomposity. Its decor implied that the cleric-philosophers had renounced worldly attachments. More dramatic expression of anti-materialism appeared, for example, in a painting by Pierre-Antoine De Machy representing the ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain after the fire of 1762 (fig. 26). The artist included in the debris the plaster cast of Pigalle's statuary group Love and Friendship which had in reality survived the catastrophe intact while the building around it, a center of business and leisure activity, had been totally destroyed. Diderot went out of his way to make the secular moral clear for the readers of his Salon criticism:

> "...le groupe de l'Amour et l'Amitié resta intact au milieu des flammes et de la chute des murs et des poutres, des toits, en un mot de la dévastation générale qui s'étendit de tous cotés autour de leur piédestal sans en approcher. Mon ami, sacrifions à l'mour et l'amitié."[34]

Love and Friendship, virtuous antidotes to egotism and materialism, were the sceptic Diderot's humanistic substitutes for religious faith in the vanitas formula. They endure while all else falls in ruin.

A tradition of ruin imagery in Nativity scenes also survived in the eighteenth century, but the notion of ephemerality is presented in a slightly different light. The vanitas ruin, whether as backdrop to a still life or in a catastrophe scene, is implicitly denigrated; it is inferior to something else which is transcendant, more durable, and thus morally superior. In Nativity scenes of the Renaissance, as inter-

preted by Erwin Panofsky, ruins denote a state of inferiority too since they symbolize the Old Dispensation which was superseded by the New Dispensation inaugurated by Christ's birth.[35] But by the eighteenth century, this interpretation appears to have been forgotten and the ruins of Nativity scenes refer to a simple point of doctrine: the humility, that is humanity, of the Christ child. The ruin, then, symbolizes the human condition with the intention of soliciting sympathy and empathy for a shared condition of existence rather than a moral judgement about an inferior one.

This obvious difference elucidates the meaning of one of the most brilliant ruin decors of a religious kind in the eighteenth century. Although executed by a family of Italians, the Brunetti, it was commissioned about 1750 for a chapel in the Foundling Hospital of Paris (fig. 18).[36] The entire chapel was transformed illusionistically into a ruinous stable, with the Holy Family seen behind the altar. In being surrounded by the ruinous stable, the spectator was made more poignantly aware of his precarious condition as a subject of time. The message is conveyed by a description of the chapel published by an anonymous contemporary who, having noted that the vault overhead was "ruinée par le tems", found solace in the sight of the Christ child safe under a firm ceiling. The allusion to salvation leads him to exclaim in capital letters: LAUDATE PUERI DOMINI.[37] This statement is of special interest because the powerful emotions involved, approaching terror, so clearly anticipate the taste for danger (real or vicarious) which later became a major pre-occu-

pation of the Romantic period. It also presents persuasive evidence that Rococo ruins were not always innocuous decorative distractions: the author even goes out of his way to point out that such accessories are critical to the effect of the ensemble.

Relatively few ruins in the art of eighteenth century France appear in religious imagery; nearly all are secular. These ruins nevertheless often expressed philosophical attitudes regarding the human condition, as ruins always had, yet with new points of emphasis determined by current ideas and events. The cultural and historic trends which most significantly influenced the quantity, style and iconography of ruin imagery at this time seem to have been: first, the developing empiricism of contemporary thought which urged men to reach an understanding of the dynamics of existence; secondly, the growing veneration of nature as the source of ultimate wisdom and understanding; and thirdly, the increasing dissatisfaction with contemporary society. These trends were accompanied by acute anxiety about society's viability and continued existence. The second half of the century, in particular, was a period of intense, at times desperate, analysis of man's place in nature which led intellectuals to recognize in the process of architectural ruin the embodiment of urgent and compelling truths about the fate of man and society.

Antiquarianism and Neo-classicism in the strict sense of the word seem in retrospect to have been pretexts for indulging in the experience of ruins. While it is true that arche-

ology flourished as a hobby and ruin sites were diligently measured and studied, the publications produced, such as Julien-David Le Roy's Les Plus beaux monuments de la Grèce or Piranesi's Antichità Romane, were deluxe picture books. Scrupulous accuracy of detail seems to have been important not so much for purposes of later imitation or even for instruction, but instead as a guarantee of authenticity of the truth of the image.[38]

The popularity of ruin imagery was more dependent upon its power to stimulate the senses, which is not to say, however, that its appeal was necessarily frivolous. The ruins of Joseph Vernet are iconographical variations of his better known shipwreck scenes, portraying natural dramas where man or his buildings are in peril (fig. 19). Hubert Robert's capricci made major alterations in building locations, plans and proportions yet threw Diderot into a state of profound philosophical reflection (fig. 20). Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's painting of ruins à l'antique is hardly reminiscent of Antiquity at all. It is not even an antique subject but rather a moody portrait of a contemporary garden appealing primarily to sight and poetic tastes for mystifying atmosphere (fig.21). Fabriques of gardens, even those of the sacred Doric order, were fashioned for semi-religious experiences of melancholy, not as memorials to any specific events or figures of history. Architectural inventions such as the Column House at the Désert de Retz (fig. 22) or the Temple of Modern Philosophy at Ermenonville are linked only in the most obscure way to classical philosophy and aesthetics.[39]

The manifest eccentricity and seeming frivolousness of much eighteenth century ruin imagery, if considered from the perspective of archaeological Neo-classicism, can only be bewildering. To alleviate the confusion, the extreme subjectivity of invention has been frequently labelled "pre-romantic" or "romantic" in recent years. This has led, unfortunately, to another limited interpretative approach where attention is monopolized by the suggestions in ruin imagery of perversity and escapism into private worlds of hedonistic pleasures, irrationalism and historical fantasies. The escapist element of the pre-romantic artistic sensibility is, of course, considerable but the escapist tendencies evidenced in ruin imagery are only one symptom of a complex intellectual and emotional crisis which French society as a whole was undergoing. To understand the appeal of ruin imagery fully, that crisis must be taken into consideration.

Historians of ideas now generally agree that neither the Enlightenment nor its offspring in the arts, Neo-classicism, were really born of confidence as once believed. Early in the century, scientific breakthroughs such as Newton's laws had provided methods of investigation with which men hoped to fathom mysteries of existence which were thought to have retarded progress in the past. The new empiricism, however, kept revealing more intellectual problems than it could readily solve.[40] From the vast number of pages devoted by the philosophes to speculations about the past, present and future of mankind, it would seem that confidence about man's place in nature was rather at a low ebb.

The dilemma of Voltaire at mid-century well illustrates the intellectual crisis of his time. To reconcile theoretical ideals and realities, Voltaire had sifted the recorded wisdom of many great world traditions - Antique, Oriental, and even Islamic - yet his final conclusions were alarmingly unenlightening. His story Memnon of 1747 is a grizzly account of how two innocent, well-intentioned protagonists are battered and maimed by an indifferent Fate. Twelve years later in Candide Voltaire concludes that the only real solace possible for man lay in the existential rewards of tending his own garden.

Voltaire's generation of sceptics held on with amazing tenacity to hopes for the eventual betterment of society, but as the decades passed, the spirits of the next generation yielded more frequently to despair. Frank Manuel has documented the frantic search for enlightenment during the pre-revolutionary decades paying special attention to its irrational compulsions. He has noted that among "the perennial topics that obsessed eighteenth century writers (were) the idea of inevitable declension, the problem of how a society, bogged down in a rut of sameness, ever emerges into new growth, the fear of geological catastrophes and barbarian invasion..."[41] Manuel's assessment of the darker side of the Enlightenment is born out in the voluminous writings of Louis-Sébastien Mercier, a one-man summation of the period's intellectual and ethical concerns. By turns, an amused and curious chronicler of Parisian life, a scathing critic of the state, a self-appointed watchdog of morality, a grimly indif-

ferent prophet of disaster, a utopian visionary and a howling paranoiac, Mercier was consistent only in the undertone of crisis which pervades his writing and presumably drove his pen.[42] Like any good empiricist of his generation, Mercier deified Newton, put great trust in man's faculties of reason, cherished la belle Nature and held to the principles of man's perfectibility, but as Henry Majewski has observed, he could not dispel the nightmarish visions of doom which haunted so many of his contemporaries. About Mercier's generation, Majewski writes:

> The myth of the end of the world growing in the pre-romantic imagination in the last quarter of the eighteenth century ... is, of course, strongly linked to troubled concern about the decadence of society and political disorder. ... It is produced through the association of new intellectual and scientific concepts of the universe, religious pre-occupation and personal anguish, taking form principally in disturbing presentiments of destruction and geological catastrophe, illuminist and visionary forewarnings of the end of all civilization, as well as the demise of the natural world, all of which offers convincing evidence of the increasing anxiety of French civilization long before the Revolution.[43]

As a rationalist, Mercier had grandiose expectations for the future of civilization - nature would soon reveal the simple rules needed to harmoniously order society. However, as an empiricist, he was overwhelmed by the complexity of the social ills at hand. The fact that social decadence seemed to be relentlessly growing drove him to progressively bleaker conclusions about the near future.

Since the later eighteenth century actually did end in political revolution, conventional wisdom has it today that escape from political and social tension was the primary pur-

pose of picturesque gardens with their shaded groves, Chinese pagodas and ruins. This escapist theory never explains, however, just how aristocratic connoisseurs would have found consolation in metaphors of their own decadence and approaching demise, which, presumably, the ruins were. Isolated instances of suicidal and masochistic inclinations can no doubt be found, but the evidence of picturesque gardens overwhelmingly suggests, as do ruin pictures and literary sources, first that ruin sensibility was shared by the bourgeoisie as well as the aristocracy, and secondly, that all considered it an antidote to, not a symptom of, moral corruption. Ruins were looked upon as a stimulant to the mind and moral sense.

A good jardin anglais was like a book of hours in landscape form, peppered with objects for meditation by devotees of the cult of nature. Considerations of pleasure were not excluded, but the experience was as serious in its own way as a Rousseau-style excursion to a primeval forest. The tartar tent, the Chinese pagoda, the Doric temple and the mini-pyramid referred to a succession of peoples who in the early years of mankind had enjoyed special communion with nature.[44] Ruined architecture deserved a place of honor among these memorials because, more clearly than all the other motifs, a ruin focused thoughts on the vital forces of time and nature, the true sovereigns of mankind. Thus, in the Parc Monceau (1773-1778), a ruinous Temple to Mars symbolized time's dominion over war and violence; at Ermenonville, a ruinous Temple to Modern Philosophy (ca. 1780) symbolized the present imcomplete state of perfection in philosophy, which time would

repair; in the Jardins de Betz (begun 1771), a crumbling gothic fortress (fig. 23) was interpreted by a contemporary as a declaration of time's mastery over tyranny.[45]

By the 1760's it was acknowledged in French aesthetic theory that the condition of ruination imparted, of itself, a special kind of beauty to architecture which was superior to anything conceived by man (see below, p. 30). Ruin, that is, was losing its identification with corruption and was beginning to be consciously attributed special inspirational qualities. The beauty of a ruin was preferable to man-made beauty because it in no way repressed or dominated the sensibility of the viewer. To the contrary, it was an unmatched stimulant to the emotions and imagination. Ruins soon gained the same associations with concepts of individual liberty which, since the early years of the century, English deists had attributed to nature.[46] Echoing the spirit of Alexander Pope's couplet:

> Nature, like liberty is but restrain'd
> By the same laws which first herself ordained.[47]

French connoisseurs of the picturesque, such as Louis de Carmontelle and the abbé Delille, declared that the principle virtue of the jardin anglais (where ruins were a major attraction) was the freedom from restraints upon the imagination which they granted the visitor.[48] The co-identification of nature in its vital aspect with architectural ruin is specifically alluded to at the Désert de Retz where a Temple of Pan (that is, nature) was designed as a ruinous tholos.[49]

The belief that a state of "natural grace" could be enjoyed among the ruins provides a clue to the meaning of one of the most curious garden pavilions ever designed, the ruined column of the Désert de Retz, built about 1771 (fig. 22). Robert Rosenblum humorously observed that this ruinous dwelling permitted "aristocratic habitation of, and therefore the most intense empathy with, a fictional relic of the classical past", but the empathy was not directed at the classical past itself. For had the owner, M. de Monville, been so interested, he logically would have had an entire building in antique style erected. His plans were not those of an antiquarian seeking man-made models of beauty but rather those of a devotee of the cult of nature. His concern was to symbolize a manner of existence in harmony with the vital forces of nature.[50] According to this line of thinking, architectural decay becomes an enhancement of the canons of classical beauty, not at all their degradation.

The superiority of ruin beauty is discussed by Claude-Henri Watelet in one of the most important statements about the aesthetics of ruins printed in the eighteenth century. Appropriately, it is found in the Encyclopédie, article "Fabrique", and makes the following observations:

> ... ce mot (fabrique) réunit par sa signification, les palais ainsi que les cabanes. Le tems qui exerce également ses droits sur ces différens édifices, ne les rend que plus favorables à la Peinture, et les débris qu'il occasionne sont aux yeux des Peintres des accidens si séduisans, qu'une classe d'artistes s'est de tout tems consacrée à peindre des ruines. Il s'est aussi toujours trouvé des amateurs qui ont senti du penchant pour ce genre de tableaux...il donne à penser: est-il rien de si séduisant pour l'esprit?

Having thus legitimized the time honored "penchant" for ruins, Watelet attempts to explain on the basis of visual sensation why ruins are frequently more exciting to look at than preserved buildings:

> Un palais construit dans un goût sage... (et) si bien conservé que rien n'en est altéré, nous plaira sans-doute, mais nous appercevons presqu'en un même instant ces beautés symetriques, il ne nous laisse rien à désirer. Est-il à moitié renversé, les parties qui subsistent nous présentent des perfections qui nous font penser à celles qui sont déjà détruites. Nous les rebâtissons, pour ainsi dire, nous cherchons à en concevoir l'effet général. Nous nous trouvons attachés par plusieurs motifs de réflexion... 51

He fully understood, however tenuous his explanation might be, that he and his contemporaries preferred ruins as ruins. The cause of the aesthetic experience, however, is conservatively attributed to the imaginative reconstruction of the original form invented by the architect. In partially destroying the building, time and nature had simply enhanced the pleasure of a pre-existent beauty, not been themselves the source of the aesthetic appeal.

While preparing the Encyclopédie, Diderot seems to have been of the same opinion: that a ruin could be beautiful only to the degree that the original building had been beautiful. For this reason, he distinguished between a ruine of a once noble edifice, suitable for art, and a batimen ruiné, of nondescript features and unsuitable.[52] His position was revised by the mid-1760's, however, as he discovered attractive imagery of ruins of formerly uninteresting buildings; for example, a view of the Ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain by De Machy in the Salon of 1763 (fig. 25). By 1770 he had

even explicitly stated that ruination could render a bland edifice visually engaging.[53] Watelet eventually changed opinion too, as his revision of the article on fabriques in the 1792 edition of the Dictionnaire des Arts de Peinture, Sculpture, et Gravure indicates. He now recognized in architectural ruin a special kind of beauty fashioned purely by nature whose appeal was related to the "nuances assez fines de nos sentimens moraux,":

> ...tandis que, dans la réalité, on admire les beaux édifices, et qu'on regarde avec dédain les masures ou les chaumières, on voit souvent avec assez d'indifférence la représentation d'un palais. L'artiste qui la met sous nos yeux nous ennuie, tandis qu'on se sent attaché par la peinture des ruines d'un grand édifice, ou intéressé par celle d'une simple et pauvre cabane...les accidens pittoresques, attachés aux destructions et à la pauvrete, l'emportent en effet sur ceux de la perfection conservée et de la richesse fastueuse.[54]

The idea of beauty produced by universal forces surpassing human comprehension was crucial to the appeal of ruin imagery in the later eighteenth century. Fashioned by an infinite number of events, yet perceived in a single instant, the forms of ruined architecture often provoked sensations of an immeasurable duration of time - of eternity - with strong mystical and religious overtones. Diderot's famous experience of a ruin painting by Hubert Robert in the Salon of 1767 serves as the classic example. It inspired a manifesto of eighteenth century ruin sensibility.[55] Solitude, of course was de rigueur; Diderot calls it "la première ligne de la poétique des ruines".[56] Isolation is no end in itself, however, but a renunciation necessary for a higher kind of experience: "Dans cet asile désert, solitaire et vaste,

je n'entends rien, j'ai rompu avec tous les embarras de la vie."[57] As in much mystical literature, the essence of the experience is inexpressible in words and is thus alluded to largely in negative terms. "Tout s'anéantit, tout périt, tout passe. Il n'y a que le monde qui reste. Il n'y a que le temps qui dure. Qu'il est vieux ce monde! Je marche entre deux eternitiés..."[58]

In the wake of this experience where clock time and psychological attachments to the world are dramatically obliterated, the spectator is left with a poignant awareness of self and of mortality, at which point Diderot cries out: "Je ne veux pas mourir."[59] The final outcome is, however, a state of compassion and warm sentimentality:

> C'est là que j'appelle mon ami. C'est là que je regrette mon amie. C'est là que nous nous jouirons de nous, sans troubles, sans témoins, sans importuns, sans jaloux.[60]

If the first line of the poetry of ruins is solitude, then the last is therapeutic rehabilitation of the spirit, or what might be called, psychic regeneration. Thus renewed, the individual found an inner calm, a harmony of spirit evidenced by a heightened pleasure in ruins and solitude. Diderot wrote: "Le méchant fuit la solitude: l'homme juste la cherche. Il est si bien avec lui-même."[60]

Many writers of Diderot's day seemed ever in search of ways to humiliate human vanity, hoping to discourage arbitrary behavior out of tune with nature. Scientific theories like the heliocentric model of the universe or the belief that man had evolved from the orangutan were ammunition used

by the philosophes to combat the complacency and conceit of society.[61] It was believed that traumatic events such as geological catastrophes had in the past fostered moral strength, creativity and mutual cooperation among men.[62] Since contemporary leisure and luxury had weakened the national character, Diderot and other writers felt that frightening experiences through art might counteract the trends of decadence; hence, catastrophe paintings, dramas à la Greuze and ruins.

In literature the ruin motif has a clear connection with the theme of Time's triumph over villainy and immorality. Mercier, for example, boldly imagined Louis XIV brought back in the year 2440 by Divine Justice to contemplate the results of his megalomania and excess: Versailles in ruins.[63] The same lesson was evident in the fabriques of picturesque gardens, as is suggested by a diatribe against the abuses of power of monarchs found in Cérutti's poem of 1785 entitled Les Jardins de Betz:

> O châteaux oppresseurs! O palais insultans!
> Mais de la tyrannie, asile des rapines!
> Puissiez-vous désormais n'exister qu'en ruines![64]

The contemplation of decay seems to have had specific egalitarian overtones. Time could be escaped by no one. Even the academician Watelet was intuitively aware of the egalitarian implications of a ruin, and wrote in the Encyclopédie:

> Ce mot réunit ... par sa signification, les palais ainsi que les cabanes. Le tems qui exerce également ses droits sur ces différens édifices ne les rend que plus favorables à la Peinture...[65]

Nature, that is, transforms all things without regard to man's arbitrary hierarchy. The beauty of its touch was, therefore, of a superior kind because the beholder enjoyed a liberty of perception without the confining effects of individual artistic creation.

Ruins in non-classical styles, notably gothic ruins, could only gain in popularity from this new veneration of natural, non-human beauty. Gothic architecture had had few admirers in the early eighteenth century outside a small group of architects and amateurs, many of whom were clergymen, but gothic ruins developed an important connection with the iconography of regeneration which was at the root of ruin sensibility.[66] They thus gained a measure of favor.

If taken out of the context of the Enlightenment's crusade for moral regeneration, manifestations of the gothic revival often seem more arbitrarily perverse, not to say perverted, than even the most eccentric cases of classical ruin sensibility. Gothic ruins tended to be associated with spooky or terribying situations: with tomb desecrations, as in Robert's Demolition of the Church of the Saints-Innocents (fig. 38), or with catastrophe, as in the same artist's views of the Hôtel-Dieu after the fire of 1772 (fig. 38), or with cruel forest animals, equally cruel medieval lords, monks consumed by religious fanaticism and unrequited love, or with the inevitable tomb, all encountered in the Jardin de Betz.[67] The gothic ruin in literature of the last three decades of the century outdoes even the gardens in arousing murky "gothik" dreams.[68]

Again, the motivating force behind these apparently contrived thrills appears paradoxically to have been linked to a crisis of conscience in society, to fears of decadence and moral ill-health and to concern for renewal. Vicarious experience of bizarre passions and the contemplation of tombs were thought to expand awareness, reawaken moral concern and to reveal facets of man's nature suppressed by the confinements of civilization. It was a form of imaginative retreat from one's habitual frame of reference justified by the tacit assumption that to be emotionally aroused was to be in some obscure way morally purified. It fulfilled what the poet Delille called "le besoin d'être ému".

CHAPTER IV

RUINS AND REVOLUTION

> D'où naît ce sentiment qui nous porte à contempler ces débris où la main du tems a imprimé ses ravages?...Est-ce le tableau des étranges révolutions que le cours insurmontable des années amène sur la terre?[69]
>
> Louis-Sébastien Mercier

If any word can sum up the range of feelings expressed consciously or unconsciously by ruin imagery in the eighteenth century, the word is "revolution", as it was understood by men like Voltaire and Diderot. To approximate their ill-defined conception of a revolution, today one must resort to terms such as "social transformation." A true revolution in eighteenth century terms would entail, in any case, much more than a turnover in political regime. Sweeping changes in attitudes and morals were seen as primary effects; political and economic reform would then follow as a matter of course. Eighteenth century intellectuals believed that such revolutions had occurred in the past. Set off by great world cataclysms such as the Biblical Flood, they had been events of cosmic significance initiated by nature herself. Men merely carried them out or suffered through them.[70]

Many observers in the eighteenth century believed such a revolution was in preparation for the near future. Early

in the century warnings were issued even by reasonable men such as the mathematician, Leibnitz, who predicted a cataclysm if society's immorality continued to insult nature.[71] For similar reasons, the philosopher Giovanni-Battista Vico, in advance of his time in his rediscovery of Lucretius, recognized that the present era of history, the Intellectual one, could end in catastrophe for civilization.[72] With increasing frequency after mid-century, Parisian writers like Rousseau, Sénac de Meilhan, Mercier and Delisle de Sales revealed a brooding pre-occupation with premonitions of revolution.[73] Particularly from the 1770's on, countless numbers of mystics, pseudo-scientists and visionaries foretold of an approaching millenium.[74] Their yearning for regeneration can today be seen as merely a more extreme reaction to the same social and intellectual conditions which sparked the gadfly activities of philosophes like Diderot. The specific terms of the many predictions varied from final holocaust utopia but all expressed feelings that present polititical and social conditions could not endure and that a historical epoch was ending as another was being born.

Ruin imagery became one of the most effective vehicles of expression of the state of malaise which inevitably accompanied prospects of change. Decayed architecture was a man-made structure undergoing transformation by the forces of nature and was thus in a situation analagous to the transitional state of society whose stability had turned to stagnation and whose comforts had become repressions of the spirit. The freely structured character of a ruin was, by

contrast, poetic and inspirational, and most importantly it signified change. Ruins ceased therefore to be exclusively remembrances of the past and were seen also as premonitions of the future. Some ruin imagery proved even prophetic.

In general, the beauty of a ruin was a sign of the vitality of existence, albeit a materially destructive one. The notion of ruin as a stage preceding rebirth was so universally understood in the eighteenth century that even François Boucher contributed to the regenerative iconography of ruins, though perhaps unknowingly. His design for a masonic diploma (fig. 24) captured the spirit to perfection. Its background ruins are engulfed in tenebrous shadows and symbolize the unregenerate state of the initiate prior to illumination. The inscription on the banderole, Post tenebras lux, makes the meaning clear: dissolution and darkness must precede new wisdom and light; ruins precede regeneration.

CHAPTER V

THE "FRESH" REVOLUTIONARY RUIN - A SPECIAL CASE

The deteriorated architecture in Boucher's masonic diploma refers to the transformation of an individual psyche, but the motif of ruins in other pictorial contexts could refer to the transformation of society as a whole. There are instances where even classical ruins had this more generalized, "revolutionary" iconography, but it can be found vividly expressed in a group of pictures, done mostly in the few decades prior to 1789, which depict "fresh" or "modern" ruins. These are views which document the destruction by catastrophe or demolition of certain buildings in and around Paris. Political and cultural historians, and residents of Paris have long appreciated the topical interest of these works, and specialists in art and literature of the later eighteenth century have on occasion noted their distinctive character.[75] But their significance as evidence of a most peculiar kind of ruin sensibility has not been studied, nor have many of the individual pictures received the serious attention they deserve. These fresh ruins, however, form a sub-genre of ruin imagery which is worthy of study for its own sake. In addition, they aid the interpretation of more general developments in the iconography of ruin imagery as a whole.

The uniqueness of modern ruins is that they are totally free from association with antiquarian nostalgia, classical ideals and tourism. With few exceptions the modern buildings portrayed in ruin were of no special aesthetic merit; many were positively disliked. The urge to paint them was rooted instead in the emotional reactions of artists and the public to the current events with which the ruins were connected. And a persistent feature of those events is that they were considered by contemporaries as signs or portents of social change and regeneration.

Critics of the later eighteenth century apparently had ambivalent attitudes regarding paintings of this kind. Because they lacked the requisite age and nobility of classical ruins, modern ruins were at times snubbed by both Diderot and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.[76] Yet Diderot himself was one of the first to go on record in praise of a modern ruin image. In 1763, the salon critic was deeply moved by De Machy's two views of the Foire Saint-Germain after the great fire of the year before (figs. 25,26). The relevant excerpt from the 1763 salon review has already been quoted as evidence of the moral crusade which Diderot had undertaken at the time (see p. 21); true to his mission, he emphasized above all else the drama and moral implications of the event related in the painting as opposed to its aesthetic merits. The emotional excess and hyperbole of his commentary were intended to incite in the reader an experience of emotional transport similar to that which Diderot presumed the painter had sought to communicate pictorially. Both painter and writer were, in

effect, offering to the public a "moral exercise" not unlike the seventeenth century Jesuit spiritual exercises, employing stimulation of the senses in order to strengthen character, combat decadence and rattle complacency. The modern ruin thus became an object worthy of contemplation because in an immediate way it reminded the viewer of his vulnerability to the quick stroke of fate.

If Diderot's flamboyant imagery of "collapsing walls ... and general devastation" seems inflated next to De Machy's straightforward rendering of the scene, it finds a perfect match in the style of a suite of six etchings on the same subject by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (fig. 27). The piles of smouldering debris bespeak the same fascination with danger and destruction that one encounters in the literature of sensibilité written by Diderot and such contemporaries as Rousseau and Mercier. Their concerns for social renewal and their uncertainties about the future (see pp. 37-38) provide a useful historical perspective from which to interpret this strange cataclysmic moment in the career of Saint-Aubin. The contemporary unrest in Paris which these men all seem to have felt suggests why a dry point inscription added along the upper edge of the most tumultuous of Saint-Aubin's views should read: "l'an J.C. 3000, ruines de Saint-Sulpice" (fig. 28). The church Saint-Sulpice, located adjacent to the Foire Saint-Germain, was hardly damaged by the fire so the inscription evidently refers to a millenialist fantasy of the established church in ruin.[77] Saint-Aubin was a maverick artist, unfairly rejected by the academy, so he may have inscribed

the plate himself. In any case, the inscription is wholly in keeping with the troubled atmosphere of the times. The artist was personally acquainted with Mercier, whose writings are infused with a spirit of millenialist and visionary paranoia.[78]

Yearning for social and national reform in the later eighteenth century manifested itself in a directly constructive ways as well, particularly in growing support by the state for urban renewal programs. These projects involved numerous demolitions - some to clear sites for new constructions, others simply to clean up the capital city. All were aimed at restoring dignity to the national image.

De Machy, a good academician, so clearly recognized the regenerative theme of these demolition programs that he developed a pictorial formula to express it. A comparison of two demolition paintings reveals it instantly: the ruins lie in foreground shadows and serve as a repoussoir to accentuate the presence of an orderly, dignified seventeenth century classic French facade in the background. The formula was suitable for scenes of Gothic church demolitions, such as that of the church Saint-Jean-en-Grève (fig. 29), but was an especially popular pictorial device in views of the clearing of the Louvre colonnade which rises above demolition debris (figs. 30, 31).

By 1750, the clearing of the Louvre had become the object of an intense patriotic crusade with strong undertones of pining for national regeneration. Voltaire, currently engaged in his history of Louis XIV, by which he hoped to humil-

iate the present corrupt regime, was outraged by the "shameful, rustic accumulation of debris" - that is, common dwellings - that had been allowed to obscure the view of the palace.[79] A similar tone of indictment of the regime of Louis XV is conveyed by the frontispiece of the 1752 edition of La Font de Saint Yenne's Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état présent de la peinture en France (fig. 33). The accompanying explication eliminates any possible ambiguities of interpretation: an allegory of Paris kneels before a bust of the king and points to "l'état déplorable du Louvre, et de son superbe Frontispiece déshonoré par une multitude de Bâtimens ignobles et indécens ...".[80] Colbert is remembered as "le ministre le plus zélé qu'ait eu la France pour la gloire de sa Patrie et de son Roi", while the present "mépris de la Nation pour le plus beau morceau d'Architecture que l'esprit humain ait encore imaginé" is soundly reproved. De Machy might very well have nodded to such polemics, but as he watched the work in progress, his emotions seem to have been a troubled blend of hopefulness and nostalgia since the uninspired listlessness of workers of his own day, engaged in demolition, compared so unfavorably to the nobility of past generations who had constructed the Louvre facade (fig. 30).

The tinge of nostalgia in De Machy's pictures is rooted in the implicit assumption that construction is superior to and more noble than demolition. Much like Piranesi in Rome, Parisians tended to be self-conscious about the dearth of contemporary monumental building programs. Construction was a sign of vitality which they understood and whose absence

was feared as a sign of decadence. The exciting, panoramic view of the clearing of the Louvre facade (fig. 34) by Saint-Aubin and François Blondel is thus of even greater interest than its exhilirating visual effects would in themselves merit. The scene teems with an animation which the ruins enhance: they are the first stage of an energetic activity of renewal so grand in scale that it has engulfed the entire facade of the Louvre. The artists do not play off stability and instability, classical and banal, construction and destruction. Rather, all is vital motion: progress. Destruction and ruin, they seemed to feel, were both natural components of the flux of existence.

Few artists, of course, embraced the notion of renewal through ruin so instinctively in the 1750's, but the apparent irony of the theme of regeneration through ruin was the take-off point for at least one pictorial joke. A portrait of the Parisian connoisseur Louis Petit de Bachaumont by Carmontelle has been preserved in an engraving recently published by Rosalind Ingrams (fig. 35).[81] Bachaumont, as Ingrams notes, had been instrumental in arousing official support for the renovation of the Louvre and had almost single handedly campaigned to get a memorial column placed at the center of the Place Vendôme. Carmontelle preserved the memory of this concerned citizen with due reminders of his accomplishments - the erect Vendôme column and piles of demolition debris at the foot of the Louvre colonnade.

Saint-Aubin's modern ruin views were strikingly uninhibited leaps into the future of ruin painting, forthrightly ex-

hibiting an infatuation with transience which up to this time had always been veiled by antiquarian pretexts. When Hubert Robert returned from Rome in 1765, becoming the chief ruin painter of Paris, he made even more decisive changes in the new direction.

While in Rome, Robert had shown more interest in everyday life than in the doctrinaire tendencies of Neo-classicism and had become known primarily as a painter of decorative capricci and veduti (figs. 20, 36). His work, however, should not always be taken lightly because he was an artist in whom an irrepressible fantasy was guided by a keen, even brilliant, intelligence and an acute awareness of events going on around him. Jean Cailleux, one of the few connoisseurs today to have taken Robert seriously, has rightly called him "one of the most engaging figures of his time".[82] Since Robert's views of Rome freely mingled the ruins with everyday life in the Eternal City, it should perhaps be no surprise that when back in France he often interpreted events in contemporary Paris through reference to its ruins. Those ruins were, of course, fresh ones.

The first modern ruins to inspire Robert were produced by the fire that devastated the Hôtel-Dieu on the night of December 30, 1771. He watched the actual burning, and along with Vernet and Saint-Aubin, recorded the horror - and the thrills - of watching the blaze at night.[83] His drawings of the ruins afterwards, however, are pensive and somber, with their Piranesi-like spaciousness pervaded by a quiet gloom (figs. 37, 38). The most visually powerful and interesting

of his three extant views (fig. 38) starkly presents a single remaining wall of the destroyed hospital standing out against the backdrop of Notre Dame cathedral. The juxtaposition of the ruin and the medieval cathedral grimly suggests that the hospital had been ravaged, as it were, under the eyes of the omniscient, personal God of orthodox religion. Robert was an anti-cleric and had connections with the philosophes through Madame Geoffrin, so he is likely to have had the deistic sentiments reflected by such observations of the capriciousness of fate.[84]

The gathering of so many artists to watch and pictorially record the event was perhaps partly due to the publication the year before of Mercier's muckraking chronical of Parisian life, a novel entitled Tableau de Paris. The author had subjected the Hôtel-Dieu to vicious criticism, exposing it to the public as a travesty of charity where patients were made victims of cruel, inhuman treatment.[85] They died in humility and ran the risk of being removed to the cemetery while still alive. This macabre spectacle of inhumanity, and countless others that were equally gruesome, had driven Mercier to such an extreme disenchantment with the decadence and corruption of Paris that he despairingly wrote at one point in the book that the city could best serve mankind by being consumed by fire, since it would then at least provide the world with a moral lesson.[86] His readers must have shivered at the partial fulfillment of his wish when in the following year the Hôtel-Dieu burned.

Historians of eighteenth century France have frequently

discussed the feelings of relief and restored confidence which swept over the country when Louis XVI rose to the throne in 1772. Louis XV, "le bien aimé", had long outlived his capability to rule and the last years of his reign were endless crises. His youthful successor showed all the strengths of character his grandfather had lacked: he sought responsible ministers, was a model of frugality and had a remarkably enlightened concern for his subjects' personal welfare. Major political and administrative reforms in the early years of his reign were in their quiet way a form of revolution, doomed, however, to ultimate frustration by established forces that Louis lacked the will to overcome.[87]

The context of his early reform program explains one of the most peculiar sets of modern ruin paintings ever executed: Robert's views of the royal family in the gardens of Versailles during the renovations of 1775 (figs. 39, 40). They belong to the present study first because they are views of the fresh ruin of an architectural garden, and secondly, because they are thematically linked with political renewal.

One picture (fig. 39) represents the royal family inspecting the debris of the Bassin d'Apollon as it was being dismantled. Conspicuously absent is Girardon's statuary group, Apollo surrounded by nymphs, at the same time that the entire fountain complex, formerly the symbol par excellence of the sun king, lies in wreckage. As bold and unexpected as the allusion may seem, it appears that some reference to the royal succession is implied by the disarray. This reference explains the companion piece (fig. 40) where the royal fam-

ily is shown among the fallen trees and debris of the Tapis Vert at the moment of replanting.[88] Here too regeneration is suggested.

The connection between the fallen trees and the succession is confirmed by a poem, Les Jardins, published by Robert's friend, the abbé Delille, three years after the paintings were exhibited in the Salon of 1777. Strolling in the Versailles garden, the contemplative poet had observed that:

> Trop tôt le jour viendra que ces bois languissants
> Pour céder leur empire à de plus jeunes plants,
> Tomberont sous le fer, et de leur tête altière
> Verront l'antique honneur flétri dans la poussière!
> O Versailles! O regret! O bosquets ravissants,
> Chefs-d'oeuvres d'un grand roi, de Le Nôtre et des ans!
> La hache est à vos pieds, et votre heure est venue.[89]

The auspicious beginnings of Louis' reign were greeted with enthusiasm by liberals who looked ahead to better times. Hopes for good leadership are expressed in the Tapis Vert by the inclusion of two erect statuary groups. On the right, directly behind the king, stands Puget's Milo of Cortona, representing the ancient hero devoured by wild beasts after he had caught his hand in a split tree stump. The Milo of Cortona theme had no fixed traditional iconography, but its presence here was probably intended as an expression of sympathy for the struggles of the ruler or perhaps as an encouragement to act with modesty and prudence (good advice in view of France's political fortunes after the Seven Years' War). On the left, the Castor and Pollux group recalls the youthful founders of Rome and therefore alludes to qualities of good leadership. Possibly the setting itself was chosen to

advertise Louis' sense of responsibility since the expense of renovating the garden to please Marie-Antoinette was to be regained by the sale of the fallen trees.[90]

In the 1770's Robert was at the peak of his fame, so the Versailles pictures are a testimony to his own good fortune as much as to the promising future of the regime of Louis XVI. In the 1780's his outlook on the contemporary state of France seems, however, to have dimmed considerably along with that of many of his friends. The change is not readily apparent in his output of classical ruin pictures but is clearly in evidence in the views of fresh ruins.

His depiction in 1781 of the ruins of the Palais-Royal opera house is noteworthy for its grandiose gloom (fig. 41). Men are shown cleaning up debris and carrying off bodies of victims, but the viewer's attention is monopolized by the immense empty space and the great frontal wall sealing off the perspective. The iconic quality of the composition recalls the drawings of the Hôtel-Dieu which Robert had done nine years earlier when he had also been pre-occupied by forces of destruction surpassing human comprehension.

The compositional devices of symmetry and frontality significantly reappear in a pair of modern ruin paintings of 1786-1788, documenting the demolitions of houses on the Pont au Change and the Pont Notre-Dame (figs. 42, 43). These are not pleasant paintings, which is somewhat surprising since the bridges were cleared of houses as a measure of sanitation.

Citizens had requested the urban renewal program for many years: with the bridges cleared, vistas would be opened

onto the river and air currents, a known remedy for lethargy since the time of Vitruvius, would once again freely circulate for the better health of all.[91] As part of the same program The Church of the Saints-Innocents and its cemetery were removed since the cemetery had been so over-used in the past that corpses were literally overflowing into the basements of neighboring homes.[92] Rather than celebrate these productive events, however, Robert gave signs of succumbing to despondency and cynicism.

He depicted the Pont au Change buried in mountainous, absurd piles of rubble which the few workers present could neither have produced nor removed. (fig. 42). The composition is static, its symmetry ponderous, making the half-hearted human activity appear depressingly futile - strange superhuman forces of decay seem to be triumphing.

The view of the Pont Notre-Dame also evokes feelings of brooding melancholy (fig. 43). The colors, muted grays and olives, suggest early twilight on an overcast day. The bridge is a dark horizontal mass looming ponderously above tiny figures who go about their simple chores on the river bank. It is troubling that nowhere in this picture did the artist include a single building intact. Without its title it could pass as a view of a bombarded city. Robert seems, in fact, to have invited grim interpretations by including among the sculptures lying on the river bank a broken statue of Sainte Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, and a fragment of the municipal coat of arms sculpted in stone.[93] Interpretation is speculative but it seems that this picture is a

vision of the city of Paris in ruin.

Robert was far from alone with prophetic visions of doom in the last few years before the Revolution. By 1787 even courtiers had grown nervous about the country's desperate economic and political situation.[94] Madame Vigée-Lebrun wrote in her memoirs of forebodings which she and Robert had witnessed while travelling together in 1788:

> A storm arose bringing an ominous yellow cast to the sky and thousands of lightening flashes. Enormous hailstones laid waste the whole country forty leagues around Paris ... We seemed to see on that terrible day an omen of the misfortunes which, without being an astrologer, one could have foretold.[95]

Again Mercier is a cogent interpreter of the contemporary emotional climate of Paris. In the Tableau de Paris he had recurrently prophesized the city's doom in passages such as the following:

> Est-ce la guerre, est-ce la peste, est-ce la Famine, est-ce un tremblement de terre, est-ce une inondation, est-ce un incendie, est-ce une révolution politique qui anéantira cette superbe ville? Ou plutôt plusieurs causes réunies opéreront-elles cette vaste destruction?[96]

And continuing on the next page:

> Echappez, mon livre, échappez aux flammes ou aux barbares; dîtes aux générations futures ce que Paris a été; dîtes ... que je n'ai pas passé sous silence les poisons secrets qui donnent aux cités les agitations de la maladie, et bientôt les convulsions de la mort.

Mercier's novel had become so popular by the mid-1780's that a companion volume of illustrations engraved by the Swiss artist Balthazar Dunker was published in 1787.[97] The frontispiece (fig. 44) fully explained by a legend, represents a satyr (satire) who holds up a painting (tableau) to the face of an allegorical figure of the city of Paris. The latter,

already staggering under the weight of her crown (which is shaped in the form of the Bastille) trembles at the sight of her fate - the tableau de Paris is a scene of holocaust.

The close ties of modern ruins paintings to current events made the genre naturally flourish during the Revolution, but, especially in Robert's case, the impulse to portray these events was more than a documentary one. The full significance of his justly famous painting of the demolition of the Bastille, for example, far surpasses its value as reportage (fig. 45). To best understand it, however, the subject of the pendant picture which hung next to it in the Salon of 1789 must be considered. The pendant is lost today but was listed as a view of the river Seine "during the great freeze of the winter of last year" (i.e., 1788).[98]

The freezing of the Seine, a rare occurrence, was one of the geological and climactic disturbances believed by pseudo-scientific radicals in the 1780's to be caused by society's moral corruption. This theory of interaction between mass psychological forces and the physical environment was ultimately an outgrowth of Newtonian physics, the cult of nature and various streams of occultism then popular in Paris. It linked mankind more closely than ever to the course of natural events.[99] Thus, in the early part of the decade, Pierre-Henri Mallet had predicted that:

> le déréglement des saisons, un hivers long et extraordinaire seront les dernières marques de la caducité (de la nature). Le monde moral ne sera moins troublé que le physique ...[100]

Conditions in Paris all too closely resembled that situation a few years later. A warning similar to Mallet's was issued

by a radical Mesmerist, Jean-Louis Carra, who in 1785 proclaimed an imminent millenium on the basis of signs such as recent earthquakes and the freezing of the Seine in 1784.[101] Robert perhaps paid little attention to such predictions when the Seine froze again in 1788, but he seems to have pondered their meaning in retrospect in 1789. His views of the Bastille and the frozen Seine together heralded a new era of history.[102]

The formal solidity and warm light of Robert's Bastille painting evoke a feeling of watchfulness and suspense as the era of arbitrary rule drew to an end. The mood is neither superficially jubiliant nor sad. If anything, it is stunningly realistic since it reminds the viewer that the formidable task of dismantling the Bastille was accomplished less by revolutionary zeal than by labor of the prosaic kind. Robert had perhaps cooly observed that if any new era of mankind were really in the making, its birth would require a good deal of dull work. His painting is so unflattering of the revolutionary effort that it possibly concealed a note of satire. It nevertheless unquestionably appealed to moderate revolutionaries since it was purchased by Lafayette himself.[103]

Like many modern ruins, the building in question, the Bastille, had been disliked when whole, but when in ruin, gained interest as a symbol of the "creative destruction" of revolution. The extreme emphasis on flux and change clearly anticipates Romanticism's infatuation with instability. It reflects a new attitude towards material destruction which is more vividly illustrated in an anonymous canvas of ca. 1791

entitled Allegory of the Revolution (fig. 46) recently published by Werner Hoffman.[104] A statue of liberty is posed buoyantly on a pedestal of ruin debris, with two ruinous turrets of the Bastille serving as a backdrop. It is an exaltation of destruction given heightened expression by dramatic lighting and surging compositional effects. Transience is in no way regretted; instead the spectacle of decay and transformation is meant to dizzy reason through sensuous stimulation and to provoke an almost religious experience. Like the Baroque altarpieces it stylistically recalls, this image arouses nebulous longings for a blissful future born miraculously in the wake of destruction. The part played by the ruins, to emphasize a transcendance of order, is dependent upon the inspirational and regenerative overtones of ruin iconography in general in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In all cases, whole architecture is linked thematically to a status quo situation, then increasingly to forms of social order and the limitations and repressions which the state of order was felt to have engendered. As disillusionment with society grew in the eighteenth century, the same upheavals of material existence which had been traditionally accepted as proof of life's baseness and vanity reversed meaning, as is visible in the Allegory of Revolution. Here the state of ruin is a sign of guarantee that social vitality, freedom and final justice have prevailed.

Such glorification of destruction verges on fanaticism and is the projection of a troubled mind seeking immolation of a quasi-religious kind. It might even be said that a dis-

tinguishing feature of revolutionary ruin imagery in general is that it expresses concern for, and often fascination with, powers transcending and absorbing the individual. De Machy exalts a state building program that lays individual dwellings to waste, Saint-Aubin conveys the thrill of destruction by collective efforts of urban renewal, Robert scrutinizes the operation of awesome, superhuman powers of decay in nature, time and history. None of these artists protested the injustice of fate as Voltaire might have done as a young man; all instead seemed resigned to such realities and showed a determination to understand them however cruel or perplexing they may have appeared.

There is a direct connection between this seemingly detached pre-occupation with decay and Lucretian Epicureanism. The Graeco-Roman philosopher and poet, who also lived in a period of social crisis - "an age of mad ambition and murderous class war", wrote R. E. Latham[105] - had also illustrated the supremacy of nature over mankind with metaphors of architectural ruin. The following quotation from his De Rerum naturae could almost be mistaken for a late eighteenth century commentary on an exhibition of ruin paintings:

> ... it is an established fact that everything is in perpetual flux ... Look about you and you will see the very stones mastered by age; tall towers in ruin and their masonry crumbling; temples and images of the gods defaced, their destined span not lengthened by any sanctity that avails against the laws of nature. The monuments of the great seem to ask us why we look there for immortality.[106]

Lucretius was of course widely read by the philosophes; Dorothy Schlegel has even called De Rerum naturae the eighteenth

century "naturalists' Bible."[107]

Lucretius seems to have partially instigated the strangest kind of fresh ruin imagery of the revolutionary period; the imaginary ruin, representing architecture as if in decay when in actual fact it was still whole. Lucretian medlies of destruction often culminated in visions of cataclysm. In book IV of De Rerum naturae, for instance, the poet lists a series of calamities that could overwhelm man at any moment and then generalizes that "since the elements of which we see the world composed ... all consist of bodies that are neither birthless nor deathless, we must believe the same of the world as a whole."[108] Passages of this kind were surely familiar to Mercier and other writers of the Enlightenment similarly inclined to ruminate on theories of future cataclysm and world declension. In the Tableau de Paris, Mercier indulges repeatedly in catastrophic speculation, envisioning, for example, the city of Paris reduced to a cloud of smoke.[109] In the futuristic novel, L'An 2440, he visits Versailles in ruins to demonstrate the bitter Lucretian truth that the forces of time are all-conquering.[110] Diderot, too, at moments of intense emotional transport, experienced similar visions of imaginary ruin.[111] The philosopher, Constantin Volney, employed the literary device in a manner similar to Mercier's, assailing the small-minded vanity of contemporary society. In his sweeping history entitled Les Ruines, ou méditation sur les empires, a Lucretian hymn to the rise and fall of great civilizations throughout history, he poses as a solitary visitor to ruined ancient cities and there imagines

how one day a spectator like himself will philosophically meditate upon the ruins of Paris and London.[112] This prophesy had already been in part fulfilled two years before the publication of Les Ruines when Hubert Robert painted the demolition of the Bastille in 1789 (see pp. 53-54).

Robert proved to be an unrivalled master of the imaginary ruin in the pictorial arts. Possibly the most intriguing and most misunderstood painting of the later eighteenth century French school is a ruin of this kind: his famous Grand Gallery of the Louvre imagined in ruin, executed in 1790 (fig. 47).[113]

Just what the reason was to do this picture is something of an enigma. The ambiguity of its meaning has led one expert in eighteenth century art to call it a "light-hearted joke", while another has interpreted it as an expression of sorrow for personal loss suffered as a result of the Revolution.[114] It is known to have been exhibited in the Salon of 1796 as a pendant to a renovation proposal for the Grand Gallery[115] (fig. 48) which Robert might conceivably have painted as early as the mid-1780's when he was on a royal commission delegated to plan conversion of the hall into a public art museum.[116] The ruin view might possibly have been adjoined in a spirit of facetious self-advertisement since, as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre pointed out in the Etudes de la Nature, beautiful buildings were the most likely ones to make beautiful ruins. Robert perhaps intended to pictorially demonstrate that the Grand Gallery, if renovated as he proposed, would indeed make an imposing ruin for future generations to appreciate.[117]

It is unlikely, however, that regret for personal loss was a motivating factor. In 1790, the year of the painting's execution, the Revolution was still in a stage of constructive reform working toward the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Robert's entries in the Salons of 1789 and 1791 suggest sympathy with the reform: in addition to the Bastille painting, he exhibited works whose titles are humorously and forthrightly anticlerical.[118] It was not until 1792 that efforts of moderate factions to reach a bloodless settlement of disorders were finally subverted, and up to that time, Robert would not have sustained much of a personal loss. The view of the Louvre in ruins belongs instead to a period of great optimism, and certain details unequivocally indicate that the artist meant this painting to be a statement of revolutionary enthusiasm.

First, the ruin, though on a grandiose scale, reflects no source of destruction other than great age. The building is experiencing, so to speak, a natural death: the kind which intellectuals of the eighteenth century had taken such pains to resign themselves to and understand. Also, there is activity taking place in the ruin, something which has been surprisingly overlooked. A seated artist is sketching the Apollo Belvedere with his back to the fallen Michelangelo Bound Slave. The latter, because of Michelangelo's links with the Vatican, is probably meant as a symbol of pre-revolutionary bondage, overturned in the process of nature's "creative destruction". Meanwhile, the Apollo Belvedere, the very symbol of the Enlightenment, remains standing as a

guide to the future. As in many modern ruin views, the phenomenon of transience appears to have stimulated thoughts on regeneration. Robert's view of the Louvre in ruins, though perhaps conceived with certain humorous intentions, is one of the most powerful expressions of the theme: regeneration through ruin.

The period of optimism which inspired the imaginary ruin of the Louvre ended in late 1792, when control of the Revolution fell into the hands of the extremists. The course of events from then on is well known, culminating in the death of the royal family and in attempts to exterminate the aristocracy and its sympathizers. As a final revenge against the Bourbon dynasty, the decision was made to desecrate the royal tombs of Saint-Denis, an action which popular opinion justified as a rite of cleansing.[119] Robert chose to represent this lurid episode which began on October 12, 1793, from within the tomb itself, as a sort of fresh ruin (fig. 49). Ironically it is his most impassive document of the Revolution, making its point through understatement. The event is reported as a fait accompli. The tomb is cavernous and empty; the coffins are empty; the minds of the men completing the desecration are likewise empty. The only remaining echo of the existence of the royal dynasty is a plaque inscribed with the name Louis XVI, which itself is ironic since Louis XVI had not been laid to rest here.

As Robert stared into this gaping hole and meditated upon the extinction of a nearly thousand year old national institution, it is likely that for the first time since the

Revolution began, cares for his personal safety were weighing heavily on his mind. The Reign of Terror had begun and only a few days earlier Mercier and a group of Girondins had been arrested as security risks. Shortly before that, Volney, also a moderate, had been jailed as a counter-revolutionary.[120] Robert's imprisonment on October 29, two weeks after the Saint-Denis crypt was opened, cannot therefore have come as a complete surprise. His subtle, aloof view of the tomb desecration is all the more remarkable given the anxiety he must have then been experiencing.

His incarceration lasted for the nine darkest months of the Revolution.[121] The cause of the arrest is still unclear, but according to Robert's own account, he was sentenced to death and escaped the guillotine only by a mistake in identity. All the while he continued to paint and draw, choosing innocuous subjects from prison life such as inmates walking the halls or gathering on the stairs. Letters written by fellow prisoners speak of him as an entertaining and engaging companion, yet there is also evidence suggesting pre-occupation with spiritualism or mysticism.

An often reproduced ink wash drawing representing himself in his jail cell merits attention in this regard (fig. 50). The inscription, "Dum spiro spero", is a likely enough declaration of resignation to be made by an Enlightenment artist faced with adversity, but the drawing itself bespeaks a troubled spirit. The lighting is murky and disconcerting, the planar composition is almost hieratic and stark, and strangest of all, the figure is shrunken in scale, stiff and

pitifully feeble. His presence is otherworldly and conveys suppressed feelings of despair and isolation. The theme of the imprisoned artist was later to become a favorite subject for Romantics inclined to advertise their estrangement from society, but rarely did the nineteenth century see the theme as poignantly interpreted as in this Robert drawing.

Another sign of spiritual pre-occupation during the prison period is an imaginary view of excavators transporting a newly unearthed statue of Minerva. Its allusion to wisdom and the study of mysteries is underlined by the inscription where the artist dedicated his "nocturnal occupations" to the goddess.[122] He may have meant among other things the study of Egypt which he is known to have then been undertaking since he borrowed a book on the subject from another prisoner.[123] Throughout the eighteenth century, Egyptology had been linked with interests in death cults, mystery religions, magic and the occult in general.[124]

Signs of a growing emotional insecurity and taste for mystification can be seen in several paintings of fresh ruins that postdate Robert's release from prison. The most cataclysmic image of his entire oeuvre dates from the period 1797-1800 and seems related to the millenial fears (and hopes) sweeping Paris in the last decade of the century. It is a picture in oils on canvas representing the shattered walls and flying buttresses of the church of Saint-Jean-en-Grève as it was being torn down (fig. 51). A recently developed method of demolition employing fire had apparently been used to expedite the destruction, so dark fragments of archi-

tecture frame a roaring blaze in the nave above which two bell towers ominously loom.[125] The forces of destruction appear so mighty and so final that possibly Robert was venting anxiety and frustration in a simulated holocaust. He was now in his late sixties, well past his peak of fame and a man of a bygone era.

The year 1800 was the focal point of later eighteenth century millenialist visions.[126] Even a conservative chronicler of the times like J. B. Pujoulx expected such sweeping changes to occur in the century's last decade that he predicted that the city and its people would be practically unrecognizable afterwards.[127] Both his and Robert's expectations and suspense were doubtlessly intensified by the numerous building destructions then taking place. Paris was becoming, as Louis Réau put it, "un chantier de démolitions".[128]

Gothic churches were favorite targets of this revolutionary "vandalism" (Réau's unflattering term), and among the legion of artists who depicted the fresh ruins produced by the urbanization campaign, Robert was unsurpassed in power of expression.[129] The Saint-Jean-en-Grève picture and his view of the dismantling of the church Saint-Sauveur (fig. 52) prove that he was still the most exciting ruin painter of Paris at century's end.

Modern ruin imagery was produced in profusion during the 1790's and often conveyed a mood of agitation or anxiety in regard to the rapid changes taking place in Paris. De Machy did several views of gothic church demolitions where somber interiors or a night atmosphere considerably enhance the vis-

ual appeal (fig. 29, 53). A little known artist, Sarrasin, nearly equalled Robert's power in a print of the ruins of the gothic church of the Collège des Bernardins, dating from 1797-1800 (fig. 54).

As tourists from England and the French provinces rushed to the capital to satiate their curiosity about the recent upheavals, a short-lived business of modern ruin views seems to have sprung up, to judge from the abundant examples of the genre in the Hennin and Destailleurs collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.[130] Laglumé's lighograph of ca. 1814 (fig. 55) is of the most common type: it shows the half-demolished church Saint-André-des-Arcs with the debris cleaned up for the tourist inspecting the site. It is an impressive enough ruin but lacks the impact of pictures done before 1800. The neat propriety of the state of despoilment in these later images all too clearly recalls the typical Roman vedute of the early eighteenth century.

Appropriately, it was Hubert Robert who made the last major contribution to the genre of modern ruins in the revolutionary era. About 1807, he painted two canvases, presumed to be pendants, one showing the demolition of the Church of the Feuillants, and the other, an imaginary view of the Sorbonne Chapel in ruin (figs. 56, 57). The purpose of the pairing is easy to guess since, before the Revolution, the Sorbonne had been a church-run college while the Feuillants had had strong aristocratic associations; its congregation had been traditionally one of the wealthiest of Paris, and during the Revolution a royalist faction, the Club des Feuillants,

had held their meetings there until the Jacobins came to power in 1792.[131] The ruin of these two buildings was thus a symbol of the final demise of the ancient régime.

The Sorbonne picture is richer still in meaning because it is probably Robert's last - and most personal - statement of recognition of the special inspirational powers of ruins. The barrel vaulted chapel was converted after the Revolution into artists' studios, a change which seems to have triggered Robert's imagination.[132] Just as he had earlier visualized the eventual decay of a public art museum, the Louvre, here he pictured to himself how another place of artistic creation, the studio, would appear as a ruin endowed with a skylight by nature. The atmosphere of the interior is mysterious and unsettling, but for "Robert des ruines", as he was then known, such an ambience was congenial to the inspiration sought by solitary artists like the one present in the lower left corner. Once again, Robert may be thought to have been simply humoring himself with a dream of decay, but to limit interpretation there is perhaps to lose the picture's most profound and evocative dimensions of meaning.

Robert not only professed here his special affection for transience; he also clearly embodied his position as an artist. His complacent observation of material decay made him an empiricist and thus a forerunner of nineteenth century Realism, but his choice of subject matter, rich in historical and philosophical associations, gave his imagination room to roam both back and forth in time. His breadth of inspiration was great enough to be nourished by the concerns of Neo-class-

icism, but he also dealt with visionary elements of a futuristic and allegorical kind. His success as a poetic visionary makes much of his work appear fully romantic, not pre-romantic.

As expectations of sudden and dramatic social change subsided after 1800, the genre of fresh ruins lost its inspiration. The swift rise and fall of the genre's popularity coincided with the build-up and dissipation of social unrest and millenial premonitions which plagued Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century. Predictably, modern ruin imagery made a comeback, albeit shortlived, in the 1870's, after the Commune and during Haussmann's urban programs.[133] It has also begun reappearing with notable frequency in literature and the visual arts since the mid-1960's.

CONCLUSION

Modern ruins, because they were dissociated from classical aesthetics, archaeology or escapism into the past, clarify two aspects of eighteenth century ruin sensibility that have hitherto received little attention. First, they present a clear case where ruinous buildings appealed as ruins, supporting current beliefs (or at least hopes) that the dynamic processes of existence were operating in the ultimate interests of mankind. Painfully self-conscious of social decadence and inertia, intellectuals saw in phenomena of transience a vital element of the historical process: destruction was a prelude to regeneration. Saint-Aubin's view of the clearing of the Louvre is infused with the new attitude which celebrated havoc as a sign of progress. Robert's imaginary view of the Grand Gallery, a disguised allegory of the Revolution, presents grandiose architectural ruin as a symbol of social transformation in a similar spirit.

Classical ruin imagery often served a comparable iconographical purpose, referring to the overwhelming power of nature and time over the artifices of man. As numerous examples prove, the sight of a classical ruin was clearly considered to have an edifying, regenerative influence on the

viewer. The experience was, however, detached from contemporary events and involved in nebulous, escapist emotions. This isolation from the real world in part explains why classical ruins survived as a major artistic genre in the nineteenth century while modern ruins appeared only at times of crisis, when premonitions of social change were most intense.

Modern ruin views demonstrate secondly that the state of ruin in itself could be viewed as morally neutral. No longer was it necessarily a condition of corruption. Connoisseurs of ruins, such as Watelet, justified their interest in decay and overcame their inhibitions in regard to the ruin taboo by noting that material decay of architecture was a fact of existence so universal that it had engaged the attention of mankind at all times and in all places. The melancholy that both fresh and classical ruins might have induced in the minds of eighteenth century viewers was not considered a consuming lethargy but instead a very human condition of sympathy and appreciation for the mysterious processes of existence. The beauty of a ruin was fashioned by, and was therefore, in supreme harmony with nature; it was neither the product of nor the flatterer of personal vanity. To the contrary, the sight of a ruin encouraged modesty and compassion while it served a warning to the frivolous, the heedless and the socially oppressive. The sentiment of melancholy itself was considered an antidote to the dulling and stifling influences of modern life.

Footnotes

1. From Italian Hours (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1909), p. 229, quoted in Rose Macaulay, Pleasure of Ruins (New York: Walker and Co., 1966), frontispiece.

2. Evidence of a patronizing conventional wisdom regarding the popularity of ruins in the eighteenth century is too abundant to cite in entirety. The bias colors most of Macaulay's Pleasure of Ruins, a remarkable book otherwise. Much of Robert Rosenblum's Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967) places undue emphasis on signs of perversity, mock-seriousness and febrile escapism in ruin imagery. John McCormick and John Fleming adopt a similar posture of condescension in their important article, "A Ruin Room by Clérisseau," Connoisseur, vol. 149 (April, 1962), p. 242. The text of Paul Zucker's anthology of ruin imagery, The Fascination of Decay (New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968) frequently takes the conventional point of view toward "The French-dominated spirit of the eighteenth century, with its desire to charm at all costs" (p. 143), "The sham quality of all these artificial ruins" (p. 239), "the playful-looking little buildings" of picturesque gardens (p. 223) etc. A special tribute is due to Jean Starobinski for having initiated a fresh interpretation of eighteenth century ruin imagery a decade ago. His evocative survey of pictorial themes favored by the Enlightenment, L'Invention de la Liberté, 1700-1789 (Geneva: Skira, 1964) not only penetratingly studies the period's obsession with notions of material transience, but, as importantly, reveals the face of seriousness behind the mask of whimsy and capriciousness so often put on by eighteenth century artists and connoisseurs.

3. Roland Mortier, La Poétique des ruines en France. Ses origines, ses variations de la Renaissance à Victor Hugo (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1974).

4. Ibid., p. 22, 43-44

5. Mortier's study leads to the astonishing, yet seemingly correct, conclusion that "la découverte de la beauté des ruines sera, dans le domaine purement littéraire, une des conquêtes de l'âge des 'Lumières'" (p. 90) and that Diderot deserves to be called "l'inventeur de la poésie des ruines" in French literature (p. 91).

6. Even distinguished specialists in eighteenth century art show a tendency, for unclear reasons, to discount the importance of Roman veduti. In a February, 1976 lecture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., F.J.B. Watson, for

example, referred to Hubert Robert as a 'photographer' of Roman antiquities.

7. See Mortier, La Poétique des ruines, pp. 27-28, for a sample of Renaissance statements glorifying the ruins' resistance to time.

8. Mortier, ibid., p. 21, points out that Petrarch avoided the word "ruin", preferring instead the words "relic" and "vestige".

9. Before the mid-seventeenth century, ruin viewing was probably much less popular as a pastime with tourists in Rome than is generally presumed. A common reaction of visiting humanists upon seeing the dilapidated monuments was to sigh for the lost splendors then make a hasty departure. See Macaulay, Pleasure of Ruins, pp. 178-179, and Mortier, ibid., pp. 21, 52, 86. R. Michéa, "La Poésie des ruines au XVIIIe siècle et la contribution de l'Italie à la sensibilité préromantique," Etudes Italiennes (January-March, 1935), pp. 120-121, notes that even eighteenth century travelers to Rome were still put off by the decrepitude of the ancient buildings.

10. See F.J.B. Watson, The Choiseul Box (London: Oxford Univ. Pres, 1963), p. 16 and plates. This exquisite little metal box, ornamented with miniatures depicting various rooms of Choiseul's mansion in Paris, documents the way the minister of state hung his famous collection of pictures. Watson unfortunately offers no comment on the iconographical program which Choiseul appears to have had in mind.

11. For a good introduction to the subject, with bibliography, see John Harris, "Le Geay, Piranesi and International Neo-classicism in Rome 1740-1750," in Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower, ed. by Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard, Milton J. Lewine (2 vols.; London: Phaidon Press, 1967), vol. I, pp. 189-196.

12. Ruin imagery by the Tiepolos and other Venetians is discussed by Peter Murray in Piranesi and the Grandeur of Rome (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), pp. 28-29.

13. See Rudolf Wittkower, "Piranesi as Architect" in Piranesi (Worcester, Mass.: Smith College Museum of Art, 1961), p. 99; and Frederick Den Broeder et al., The Academy of Europe: Rome in the Eighteenth Century (Storrs, Conn.: Wm. Benton Museum of Art, Univ. of Conn., 1973), p. 147.

14. Piranesi's disapproval of the imitative tendencies of Neo-classicism was most radically expressed in the Parere su l'Architettura (1765) but his basic position had been stated at length in Della Magnificenza ed Architettura Romani (1760). He argued that liberty of design, including rich ornamental embellishment, should be the prerogative of the artist pro-

vided that he maintain harmony between parts of the design and the whole. See Wittkower, "Piranesi's Parere su l'Architettura," Journal of the Warburg Institute, vol. 2 (1938-1939), pp. 147-158; and John Wilton-Ely, ed. and intro., The Polemical Works of Piranesi (n.p.: Gregg International Publishers, 1972), p. viii. Piranesi's feelings of isolation from prevailing trends of art in the 1760's is evident in the quote from Sallust which he added to a design in the last part of the Parere: "They despise my novelty, I their timidity."

15. Wilton-Ely's introduction to The Polemical Works of Piranesi, p. vi-vii, concisely summarizes the causes of the debate.

16. Henriade (1723) and Le Siècle de Louis XIV (1751).

17. The Neopolitan philosopher Giovanni-Battista Vico's Scienza Nova (1725; revised 1730 and republished 1745) was a major influence on Piranesi's historical theories. Especially important was Vico's "belief in the undying capacity of great nations for cultural revival," according to Wilton-Ely's introduction to The Polemical Works of Piranesi, p. vi.

18. Religious reform movements were already afoot early in the eighteenth century. At the same time that Panini began painting ruin pictures, a Neopolitan, Pietro Giannone, published a criticism of ecclesiastical decadence in his Istoria Civile dei Regno di Napoli (1723) where the contemporary institution was contrasted to the church of apostolic times. See Peter Gay, The Enlightenment, An Interpretation (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 372.

19. This yearning for a kind of miraculous moral purification of individuals and society is an underlying theme of the essays by Hugh Honour, L.D. Ettlinger, Hubert von Einem and Robert Herbert in The Age of Neo-classicism (London: The Royal Academy and Victoria & Albert Museum, 1972).

20. Thomas J. McCormick and John Fleming, "A Ruin Room by Clérisseau," Connoisseur, vol. 149 (April, 1962), p. 242.

21. Ibid. The ruin room at Waghäusel, designed ca. 1730 by M. L. Rohrer for Cardinal Damian von Schönborn, was also conceived "auf eremitisch" according to contemporary documents. See Zucker, The Fascination of Decay, pp. 244-245.

22. Pères Francois Jacquier (1711-1788) and Thomas Lesueur (1703-1770) co-authored a commentary on Newton. For biographical information, see Fourier-Bonnard, Histoire du Couvent de la Trinité (Paris, 1933), pp. 178-186; J. Fr. Michaud, Biographie Universelle (Paris, 1854), vol. XX, pp. 513-514 (for Jacquier), and vol. XXIV, pp. 303-304 (for Lesueur). Their renown as hosts is indicated by the frequent references to their hospitality and conviviality in letters to the comte de

Caylus from his correspondents in Rome - see Correspondance inédite du comte de Caylus avec le P. Piciaudi, Théatin, suivie de celles de l'abbé Barthélemy et de P. Mariette avec le même, éd. Charles Nisard (2 vols.; Paris, 1887).

23. To call it a chapel is justified historically. McCormick and Fleming discovered drawings by Clérisseau's friend and associate, Robert Adam, representing decors similar to the one in Trinità dei Monti. One of Adam's plans carries this inscription: "Un ... temple frequenté par un hermite et par lui changé en chapelle". See "A Ruin Room by Clérisseau," pp. 242-243.

24. Mortier discusses Petrarch's affection for ruins in La Poétique des ruines, pp. 27-31.

25. Published in Zucker, The Fascination of Decay, p. 18.

26. The poem is reprinted in Marc-Antoine Gérard de Saint-Amant, Collection des plus belles pages de Saint-Amant (Paris, 1907), pp. 13-19.

27. Ibid., p. 19.

28. Ibid.

29. Reproduced with a companion verse in William R. Crelly, The Paintings of Simon Vouet (new Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 212-213. The iconography is analyzed and shown to have been based on César Ripa's Iconologia by Emile Mâle, L'Art religieux après le Concile de Trente (Paris, 1932), p. 410.

30. For Claude-Henri Watelet, the eighteenth century garden expert, the experience was "seduisant" (see p. 30): for Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the sentimentalist, it was sensuously pleasurable and almost religious ("Plaisir de la Ruine," Etude XII in Etudes de la Nature /3 vols.; Paris, 1797/, vol. 3, pp. 100, 102); for Diderot, it could be sublime and, at moments, terrifying (see pp. 32-33).

31. Mortier traces the symbolism back to Latin literature in La Poétique des ruines, pp. 15-19. The classical Greeks seem to have never employed the literary motif, as Mortier rightly notes (p. 15); however, they did associate ruins with bad fortune and disgrace. The Athenians, for example, swore to leave the Acropolis in ruin after the Persian sack of 480 B.C.

32. The problematic essence of the debate as carried on in the eighteenth century was trenchantly summarized by Voltaire in the opening statement of his article on "Luxe" in the Dictionnaire philosophique (1764): "On a déclamé contre le luxe depuis deux mille ans ... et on l'a toujours aimé." Voltaire tried to resolve the intellectual problem by distinguishing

between excess and luxury. The first, he pointed out, was pernicious: it brought on moral laxity and materialism; the second, however, was a necessary stimulant for the arts and other creative endeavors of civilization. Jean-Jacques Rousseau championed a radical movement which opposed luxury and economic growth of any kind. As early as 1750, in the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts, he delivered a diatribe against luxury which singled it out, along with slavery, as a major source of human unhappiness. Diderot managed to stay in the middle ground but nevertheless retained a profound distrust of society's ability to deal with the problems created by the existence of wealth. In his Satire contre le luxe à la manière de Perse, he launched a diatribe as uncompromising as Rousseau's: "O luxe funeste, enfant de la richesse! tu détruis tout, et le goût et les moeurs ..." - quoted in André Vielwahr, La Vie et l'oeuvre de Senac de Meilhan (Paris: Ed. Nizet, 1970), pp. 74-75. Vielwahr's analysis of problems in eighteenth century economic theory is thorough and concise.

33. Vielwahr, Vie et l'oeuvre de Sénac de Meilhan, p. 77.

34. Salon of 1767, reprinted in Diderot . Salons, ed. and pref. by Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar (4 vols.; Oxford: Claredon Press, 1957-1967), vol. I, p. 240.

35. Erwin Panofsky, Early Netherlandish Painting (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Row, 1971), vol. I, p. 135.

36. Yvan Christ, Eglises Parisiennes actuelles et disparues (Paris: Ed. Tels, 1947), p. 20.

37. Published as a pamphlet entitled Explication des Ouvrages de Peinture, qui viennent d'être faits par M. Natoire, dans la nouvelle chapelle de l'Hôpital des Enfans Trouves. La partie peinte d'Architecture est de Messieurs Brunetti, père et fils ... Bibliothèque Nationale, Est. Dr. George Levitine generously shared his discovery of this pamphlet with me.

38. It is no surprise that, as McCormick and Fleming point out, even the most sober scholars, like Winckelmann, truly enjoyed capricious ruin imagery - "A Ruin Room by Clérisseau," p. 242. In speaking of Hubert Robert, Jean Cailleux has described the feeling, to a greater or lesser degree, of nearly every French artist visiting Rome ca. 1750: "Rome est pour lui la ville où l'antiquité est non seulement toujours presente, mais toujours vivante." - "Hubert Robert, Dessinatuer de la Rome vivante. 1757-1765," paper delivered at the Congres International d'Histoire de l'Art, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1969. Cailleux notes further that the engravings of Roman antiquities by J. B. Leprince and Barbault, like the later works of Panini and the views of Piranesi, all celebrate the vitality of Rome preserved in its ruined monuments (ibid.). It is evident that the ruins were not considered dead vestiges needing reconstruction to have aesthetic value. See also Cailleux, Autour du Neoclassicisme (Paris:

galérie Cailleux, 1973), biographical notice for Hubert Robert.

39. Although professing scientific accuracy, the Doric revival was one of many eighteenth century manifestations of the need to experience the aesthetic of primitive man in all its primeval purity. Rosenblum, Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art, p. 145, puts the cart before the horse in writing that "this late eighteenth century fascination with the primitive in classical architecture ... ultimately led to these very un-Greek musings upon the dark beginnings of civilization." The study of primitive man had been going on since the first quarter of the century and, as in the case of Vico, was often intimately tied up with efforts to stimulate social regeneration. Concerning this aspect of Vico's writing, see note 17 above and note 62 below.

40. Carl Becker neatly and brilliantly outlined the intellectual problems in his classic essay, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pres, 1932); see especially chapter II, pp. 33-70. Peter Gay, The Enlightenment, An Interpretation, gives a sympathetic account of the philosophes' grapplings with rationalist dilemmas. A harsh, almost sour, critique but one offering, nevertheless, many perceptive observations regarding eighteenth century intellectualism, is Auguste Le Flamanc's Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires et la philosophie du 18e siècle (Paris: Librairie Vrin, 1934).

41. Frank Manuel, review of Condorcet by K. M. Baker, in Times Literary Supplement (November 28, 1975). See also Manuel's The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pres, 1959).

42. The definitive study of Mercier's pre-romantic tendencies is Henry Majewski's The Pre-romantic Imagination of Louis-Sébastien Mercier (New York: Humanities Press, 1971).

43. Majewski, "Mercier and the Preromantic Myth of the End of the World," Studies in Romanticism, vol. VII (Autumn, 1967), p. 1.

44. For the historical associations evoked by these garden ornaments, see Nikolaus Pevsner's articles, "The Genesis of the Picturesque," "The Doric Revival," and "The Egyptian Revival" reprinted in Studies in Art, Architecture and Design (2 vols.; New York: Walker and Co., 1968), vol. 1. See also Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prerévolutionnaires, pp. 46, 83-84.

45. The interpretation of the Ermenonville Temple of Modern Philosophy adopted here is Robert Rosenblum's, in Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art, pp. 116-117. The commentary on the gothic fortress in the Jardin de Betz is found in a poem by Cérutti, Les Jardins de Betz (Paris, 1792), p. 45. The author states in the preface that the piece was

written in 1785.

46. See Pevsner, "The Genesis of the Picturesque," p. 82 ff. Dorothy B. Schlegel, Shaftesbury and the French Deists (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1956) studies the influences of English deists across the channel during the first half of the century.

47. Alexander Pope, Essay on Criticism, Part I; quoted in Pevsner, ibid., p. 88.

48. Rosenblum, in Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art, p. 114, quotes relevant passages from Carmontelle's Jardin de Monceau, près de Paris ... (Paris, 1779). See also the abbé Jacques Delille's poem, Les Jardins (1780) in Oeuvres Choisies (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1850), Chant II, pp. 245-246.

49. Osvald Sirén, "Le Désert de Retz," Architectural Review (November, 1949), p. 328.

50. In a manner recalling the metaphorical spirit of Clérisseau's ruin room in Rome (see pp. 12-14), the architectural decay of the Column House was interpreted as a condemnation of vain pretensions. According to Sirén, ibid., p. 327, the Prince de Ligne, a contemporary of De Monville, wrote in his Coup d'oeil sur Beloeil (1778) that the pavilion looked like a fragment of a colossal building that, like the tower of Babel, had suffered the wrath of God.

51. Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des metiers ..., (36 vols.; Neuchâtel, 1765; reprint ed. by Frommann Verlag, Stuttgart, 1967), vol. 6, p. 351.

52. Article "Ruine", ibid., vol. 14, p. 433.

53. In the Salon of 1767, Diderot declared: "Il faut ruiner un palais pour en faire un objet d'intérêt." - Seznec and Adhémar, vol. III, p. 235. According to Mortier, La Poétique des ruines, p. 132, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was also sensitive to the beauty produced specifically by the state of ruin and not possessed by the original building.

54. M. Watelet and M. Levesque, eds., Dictionnaire des Arts de Peinture, Sculpture et Gravure (5 vols.; Paris, 1792), vol. 2, p. 248.

55. Diderot's commentary on Robert's paintings in the Salon of 1767 is reprinted in Seznec and Adhémar, Diderot. Salons, vol. III, pp. 223-249. Page numbers here refer to the extract reprinted in Denis Diderot, Oeuvres esthétiques, ed. of P. Vernière (Paris: Flammarion, 1965), pp. 637-649.

56. Ibid., p. 641.

57. Ibid., p. 644.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., p. 645

61. Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, pp. 54-56, makes an impressive inventory of the philosophes' arsenal of scientific and historical theories.

62. Joseph Rykwert cites Vico as an initiator of the eighteenth century belief that experiences of terror had been instrumental in the origin and development of the arts and speech; see Adam's House in Paradise, The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), p. 56. Rykwert notes too the importance Vico attributed to fear as one of the causes of religious sentiments (p. 62).

63. Louis-Sébastien Mercier, L"An deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s'il en fût jamais (Paris, 1770; first edit. reprint by Editions Ducros, Paris, 1971), pp. 420-421.

64. Diderot, too, saw in architectural ruin a demonstration of nature's power over political and social institutions. Palaces and temples, built for eternity, end up, he observed, as the "asile à la partie la plus indigente, la plus malheureuse de l'espèce humaine," and are "plus utiles en ruines qu'ils ne le furent dans leurs premières splendeurs." - quoted in R. Michéa, "La poésie des ruines au XVIIIe siècle et la contribution de l'Italie," p. 124.

65. Article "Fabrique" in the Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné, vol. 6, p. 351.

66. The early eighteenth century interest in gothic architecture is studied by René Lanson, Le Goût du moyen âge en France au XVIIIe siècle (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1926), pp. 8-11, 31-41. He dates the gothic revival from ca. 1750 and links it to nationalism and the need for a northern European mythology, with heroes and exemplars comparable to those of Greek and Roman mythology (pp. 10, 21 ff.)

67. The various effects are catalogued in Cérutti's Les Jardins de Betz, pp. 11-33.

68. Gabriel Legouvé's poems "La Mélancolie" and "La Sépulture", in Le Mérite des Femmes et autres poésies (Paris, 1813), employ nearly every one of the favorite themes.

69. Mon Bonnet de Nuit (4 vols.; Neuchâtel: Impr. de la Société typographique, 1784-1785), vol. I, p. 79.

70. See, for example, Auguste Viatte, Les Sources occultes du romantisme. Illuminisme-Théosophie, 1770-1820 (2 vols.; Paris, 1927; reprint ed., Champion, Paris, 1969), vol. I,

pp. 76-77, about the Swedenborgian belief in world cataclysms; also Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, pp. 82-84 quoting Delisle de Sales and other late eighteenth century prophets of doom. Majewski, in The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 29 ff., discusses many late eighteenth century visions and premonitions of cataclysm.

71. Herder quoting Leibnitz, in Briefe zur Befoerderung der Humanität; see J.-J. Mounier, De l'Influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux francs-maçons, et aux illuminés sur la révolution de France (Paris, 1822), pp. 49-50.

72. Leon Pompa, Vico's Theory of the causes of historical change (London: Institute for Cultural Research, 1971), p. 11.

73. Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, quotes a letter from Rousseau to Nicolas Bergasse (p. 78), a statement by Mercier from the Tableau de Paris (p. 139) and observations by many other writers (pp. 73-78), all expressing premonitions of a forthcoming revolution. By 1768, Diderot predicted the approaching downfall of the orthodox church - see Gay, The Enlightenment, An Interpretation, p. 372. The possible disintegration of an overcivilized epoch and thoughts of a deluge are discussed in Sénac de Meilhan's Considération sur l'esprit et les moeurs (1787) - see Majewski, The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 31.

74. Viatte's Les Sources occultes du romantisme is the best available introduction to this vast subject as it directly concerns France. He notes that a resurgence of belief in miracles was held by many to be "l'annonce de la fin des temps, consécutive aux triomphe des incrédules ... camisards et convulsionnaires se disent contemporains des derniers âges ..." (vol. II, p. 43). Swedenborg, he points out, felt that the Church was soon to be victim of a general spiritual upheaval ushering in a third age of history, the former two having been terminated by the Great Flood of the Bible and the downfall of Judaism (vol. I, pp. 76-77). A sweeping spiritual regeneration was awaited throughout Europe (see vol. I, pp. 232-238). Robert Darnton has published a very interesting study of the pseudo-scientific millenial predictions of certain Parisian followers of Mesmer in Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968).

75. In a section devoted to eighteenth century premonitions of disaster, Majewski notes that Hubert Robert, "witness to a society in anguish, depicts landmarks of the monarchy destroyed." - The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 31. Michael Levey called Robert's views of architectural demolitions "a fascinating series ... which could easily be mistaken for nineteenth century work." - Wend Graf Kalnein and Michael Levey, Art and Architecture of the Eighteenth Century in France (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 184.

A few fresh ruin compositions are discussed in Michel Gallet's article, "Paris in the Neo-classical Period: 1748-92," Apollo, vol. CI, no 158 (April, 1975), pp. 312-323. Bernard Montgolfier's study of Robert's views of contemporary Paris, "Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris au Musée Carnavalet," Bulletin du Musée Carnavalet, nos. 1 and 2 (1964) makes an invaluable contribution to the history of pre-revolutionary ruin imagery.

76. Diderot explicitly slighted De Machy in the Salon of 1767 for having specialized in modern ruins. He wrote: "Macy n'est qu'un bon peintre, Robert en est un excéllent. Toutes les ruines de Machy sont modernes; celles de Robert, à travers leurs débris rongés par le temps, conservent un caractère de grandeur et de magnifience qui m'en imposent." - Seznec and Adhémar, Diderot.Salons, vol. III, p. 249. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre also observed the prosaic qualities of fresh ruin. While contemplating an arch of triumph near Orange, which a local priest had partly demolished for the stone, he declared that while "des ruines occasionnées par le temps ... nous plaisent en nous jetant dans l'infini ... Cette ruine moderne ... fit naître d'autres réflexions sur l'excéllence de la construction des anciens ..." - "Plaisir de la Ruine," Etude XII in Etudes de la Nature, vol. 3, p. 100-101.

77. Contemporary reports indicate that the damage was minor. See Emile Dacier, L'Oeuvre gravé de Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (Paris, 1914), p. 109.

78. That Saint-Aubin and Mercier were personal acquaintances is substantiated beyond doubt by Emile Dacier, "Gabriel de Saint-Aubin et Sébastien Mercier," Revue de l'art ancien et moderne, vol. LVI (November, 1929), pp. 179-192. Mercier's direct association with Parisian illuminism is discussed by Majewski, The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 40 ff.

79. Quoted in Yvan Christ, Le Louvre et les Tuileries, histoire architecturale d'un double palais (Paris: Ed. Tels, 1949), p. 79.

80. Dr. George Levitine kindly brought this important frontispiece to my attention. It does not appear in the first edition of the Réflexions (1749).

81. Rosalind Ingrams, "Bachaumont: A Parisian connoisseur of the eighteenth century," Gazette des Beaux-Arts (January, 1970), p. 13.

82. Personal interview in Paris, July, 1975.

83. See Robert's major oil painting of the subject (galérie Cailleux, Paris), a detail of which is illustrated in Jean Cailleux, Hubert Robert, I Maestri del Colore no. 246 (Milan:

Fratelli Fabbri, 1966), pl. VI. Vernet's composition in oils is now in the Musée Calvet, Avignon. A Saint-Aubin drawing of the fire, now in the Musée Carnavalet, is illustrated in "Dessins Parisiens du XVIIIe siecle," Bulletin du Musee Carnavalet (1971), no. 105 and p. 51.

84. Robert was a friend of Madame Geoffrin, patroness of the so-called salon des philosophes - see R.-Claude Catroux, "Hubert Robert et Madame Geoffrin," Revue de l'art ancien et moderne (September, 1920), pp. 196-200. His anti-clericalism is documented by many drawings; see, for example, those discussed by Jean Cailleux, "Introduction to the Method of Hubert Robert," L"Art du Dix-huitieme siècle in Burlington Magazine (February, 1967), pp. i-iv.

85. Tableau de Paris, nouv. éd. cor. et augm. (12 vols. in 6; Amsterdam: S. Fauche, 1782-1788), vol. III, pp. 134, 138.

86. Ibid., vol. IV, p. 181

87. Saul Padover, The Life and Death of Louis XVI (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1939), p. 55 ff., fairly summarizes the initial efforts and ultimate failure of Louis to be an effective king.

88. About Robert's work as garden designer at Versailles, see Tristan Leclerc, Hubert Robert et les paysagistes français du XVIIIe siècle (Paris: H. Laurens, 1913), p. 92; and C. Gabillot, Hubert Robert et son temps (Paris: Librairie des arts, 1895). pp. 162-167.

89. Abbé Jacques Delille, Les Jardins, Chant II, in Oeuvres Choisies, pp. 260-261.

90. Gabillot, Hubert Robert et sons temps, p. 162.

91. Montgolfier, "Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris," p. 34, n. 17, quotes Mercier's Tableau de Paris: "La rivière de Seine reste cachée au milieu de la ville par les vilaines et étroites maisons qu'on a bâties sur des arches. Il serait bien temps de rendre à la ville, et son coup d'oeil, et son courant d'air, principe de salubrité." The relationship between air currents and spiritual vitality is discussed at the beginning of Vitruvius, book VIII.

92. Complaints about the unsanitary conditions of the cemetery date back to the fifteenth century - George B. Whittaker, The History of Paris from the Earliest Period to the Present Day (3 vols.; London, 1825), vol. 3, pp. 326-327

93. The identification was first made by Montgolfier, "Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris," p. 13.

94. In 1786, Mercy, a conservative aristocrat close to the queen, wrote in a letter: "The present government surpasses

the last one in feebleness, disorder and rapacity, and it is morally impossible that this anarchy continue for long without giving place to some catastrophe." - quoted in Padover, The Life and Death of Louis XVI, p. 121.

95. Madame Marie Louise Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Memoirs, 1755-1789, trans. by Gerard Shelly (New York: Doran Co., 1927), p. 120.

96. Tableau de Paris, vol. IV, p. 175.

97. Balthazar Dunker, illustrator, Tableau de Paris, ou explication de différentes figures, gravées à l'eau forte, pour servir aux différentes éditions du Tableau de Paris, par M. Mercier (Paris: Yverdon, 1787).

98. Emile Bellier de la Chavignerie, Dictionnaire général des artistes de l'école français (2 vols.; Paris, 1885), vol. II, p. 393.

99. Le Flamanc's analysis of the foundations of eighteenth century scientific theory clarifies the "logic" of such beliefs - Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, p. 38 ff. A group of self-appointed disciples of Newton, enthused by Mesmer's theories of animal magnetism, made the supposed interaction of the physical and the moral worlds a central point of revolutionary dogma. See Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 108 ff.

100. Quoted from Pierre-Henri Mallet, "L'Edda des Islandais ou mythologie celtique," in L'Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1787) in Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, p. 79.

101. Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment, pp. 108-110.

102. In 1790, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, whom Robert knew, wrote: "En pensant ... aux révolutions de la Nature qui avaient désolé la France l'année dernière, je songeais à celle de l'Etat qui les avaient accompagnées, comme si tous les malheurs s'entresuivaient ... Les royaumes ont leurs saisons comme les campagnes ..." - quoted in Le Flamanc, Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, p. 78.

103. Lafayette owned the version today located in the Musée Carnavalet, although it is not certain that Lafayette's was the same one that hung in the Salon - see Montgolfier, Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris, pp. 14-15.

104. Werner Hoffman, "Sur "La Liberté' de Delacroix," Gazette des Beaux-Arts (September, 1975), p. 67 and fig. 7.

105. Lucretius, On the Nature of the Universe, trans. and

intro. by R. E. Latham (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 14.

106. Ibid., pp. 179-180

107. Shaftesbury and the French Deists, p. 51. Gay, The Enlightenment, An Interpretation, pp. 99-105, discusses Lucretius and the philosophes.

108. On the Nature of the Universe, p. 178.

109. See Majewski, The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 33-38. In the Tableau de Paris, vol. VII (one of the volumes written in the mid-1780's and not included in the first edition), Mercier describes how Paris appeared to him from the top of one of the towers of Notre-Dame cathedral: "... je n'apperçois plus cette Capitale que comme un amas confus de décombres ..., ce vaste Paris ... exhale la fumée, et il semble me dire, tout est fumée." - quoted by Majewski, ibid., p. 38. In Mon Bonnet de Nuit (1784), vol. III, p. 107-108, he contemplates the future destruction of Saint-Peter's in Rome. Mortier, La Poétique des ruines, p. 101-105, quotes passages from a poem of 1768 by Jean-Baptiste Coeuilhe where visions of imaginary ruins occur.

110. Mercier, L"An 2440, pp. 420-421.

111. In the 1767 Salon review, Diderot exclaimed: "Nous anticipons sur les ravages du temps, et notre imagination disperse sur la terre les édifices meme que nous habitons." - Diderot, Oeuvres esthétiques, p. 641.

112. Constantin-François Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney, Les Ruines, ou méditation sur les révolutions des empires, nouv. éd. cor. (Paris: Desenne, 1792), pp. 9-10.

113. The painting, lost to the art world after the Russian revolution, is now in a private collection in the United States. The present owner claims that it is signed and dated 1790. This information was kindly furnished to me by the galérie Cailleux, Paris.

114. Marianne Roland Michel has written that it was "no doubt a light-hearted joke" - "From the'Museum' to the Musée du Louvre: Schemes and Transformations in Connection with Two Paintings by Hubert Robert," L"Art du Dix-huitième siècle in Burlington Magazine (March, 1963), pp. i-iv. Jean-François Méjanès, however, finds it "the declaration of a man whose universe, pleasant to the point of levity, ... had been completely overturned by the Revolution." - French Painting 1774-1830. The Age of Revolution (Detroit Institute of Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), no. 158, pp. 592-593.

115. Bellier de la Chavignerie, Dictionnaire général des artistes de l'école française, vol. II, p. 393

116. For Robert's involvement in the formation of the Louvre museum, see Gabillot, Hubert Robert et sons temps, pp. 174-181.

117. Etudes de la Nature, vol. 3, p. 103: "Une belle architecture donne toujours de belles ruines. Les plans de l'art s'allient alors avec la majesté de ceux de la nature."

118. Bellier de la Chavignerie. Dictionnaire général des artistes de l'école française, vol. II, p. 393. Gabillot, Hubert Robert et son temps, p. 182, notes that in 1793 Robert's "oeuvres récentes semblaient montrer qu'il s'était enthousiasmé par les idées généreuses du moment."

119. As Le Flamanc demonstrates, most of the revolutionary vandalism and violence - including the executions during the Reign of Terror - were carried out under moral pretexts with overtones of religious ritual. See Les Utopies prérévolutionnaires, pp. 32-33. Roger B. Cornwell, The Spirit of Revolution in 1789 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 193-195, describes how Mirabeau and Talleyrand justified (presumably with straight faces) the confiscation of church property by the state. They claimed the action would check ecclesiastical luxury and vice and would restore the church to its primitive state of purity; secularization would thus render a service to the cause of religion. The desecration of the royal tombs at Saint-Denis, decreed by the national convention of July 31, 1793, had been demanded for nearly a year by fanatics like the poet Lebrun who had written:

> Purgeons le sol des Patriotes
> Par des rois encore infecté.
> La terre de la Liberté
> Rejette les os des despotes ...

- quoted in Albert Mathiez, Les Origines des cultes révolutionnaires (1789-1792) (Paris, 1904), p. 37. Whittaker, The History of Paris, vol. III, p. 406 ff., gives a detailed account of the tomb desecrations.

120. Volney, a fervent liberal, was jailed in 1793 as a royalist after criticizing the Jacobins - see Michaud, Biographie Universelle, vol. 44, p. 68. Mercier was arrested on October 6, 1793 - Raymond Trousson, intro. to Mercier, L"An 2440, p. 24.

121. Robert was released from prison on August 9, 1794, after the demise of Robespiere. For information on Robert's prison period, see Gabillot, Hubert Robert et son temps, pp. 182-199, and Ferdinand Boyer, "Hubert Robert dans les prison de la Terreur," Bulletin de la Societé d'histoire de l'art français (1963), pp. 385-388.

122. The Latin inscription, published by Montgolfier, "Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris," note 33, reads: "H. Robert in Sti Lazaris (i.e., the prison Saint-Lazare) aedibus nocturnos suos labores Minervae dicat." The drawing is not dated but must have been done after January 31, 1794 when Robert was moved from Sainte-Pélagie to Saint-Lazare.

123. Gabillot, Hubert Robert et son temps, pp. 185-187.

124. See Barbara Maria Stafford, "Mummies, Herms and Colossi: Easter Island and the Origin of Sculpture," Art Quarterly, vol. XXXVI, nos. 1/2 (Spring-Summer, 1973), pp. 31-55; and Nikolaus Pevsner, "The Egyptian Revival," reprinted in Studies in Art, Architecture and Design, p. 213 ff. Egyptian motifs first appear in Robert's work about 1760, as Pevsner notes (p. 214), but the Egyptian revival in general did not mature beyond its initial "rococo" stage until the late 1770's. By the 1780's, according to Pevsner (p. 232), masonic lodges had adopted Egyptian embellishments and rites while Egyptian art and architecture gained the associations with the transcendant and mystic that it enjoyed in the nineteenth century. Robert's interest in Egypt in the 1790's is most likely to have been, therefore, of a serious kind.

125. Petit-Radel demonstrated a method of destroying a Gothic church in ten minutes with the use of fire at the Salon of L'An VIII (1800). The painting by Robert suggests that the idea had already been experimented with on Saint-Jean-en-Grève which, according to Montgolfier, "Hubert Robert, Peintre de Paris," pp. 22-23, was demolished between 1797 and 1800. Réau, Monuments Détruits, vol. 2, p. 22, states that Petit-Radel employed the technique on Saint-Jean-en-Grève, but mistakenly puts the date at 1800-1802.

126. Majewski, The Pre-romantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier, p. 31.

127. Jean-Baptiste Pujoulx, Paris à la fin du XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1801), p. 381.

128. Louis Réau. Les Monuments détruits de l'art français. Histoire du vandalisme (2 vols.: Paris: Hachette, 1959), vol. II, p. 10.

129. Réau, ibid., p. 10 ff., offers the most comprehensive study to date of post-revolutionary demolition projects. Yvan Christ, Eglises Parisiennes actuelles et disparues, is a storehouse of additional information and visual documentation relative to the same subject. Whittaker's History of Paris, vol. I, p. 154 ff. gives picturesque details available first hand only to a contemporary observer: for example, that Saint-Pierre-aux-Boeufs was turned into a cooper's workshop, Saint-Landri, a dyeing factory, Sainte-Marine, a sugar refinery etc.

130. Both are kept in the Cabinet d'Estampes and together contain literally hundreds of modern ruin views in drawings and prints from the later eighteenth century. In addition, the Musée Carnavalet possesses a large collection of related imagery.

131. Christ, Eglises Parisiennes actuelles et disparues, p. 36.

132. Whittaker, The History of Paris, vol. I, p. 150. The Sorbonne remained this way until 1819 when the painters and sculptors were given notice to vacate.

133. See, for example, J.-L.-E. Meissonier's The Palace of the Tuileries after the Commune, 1871 (Compiegne); il. in The Academy, Art News Annual XXXIII (October, 1967), ed. by Thomas Hess and John Ashbery, p. 11.

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FIGURES

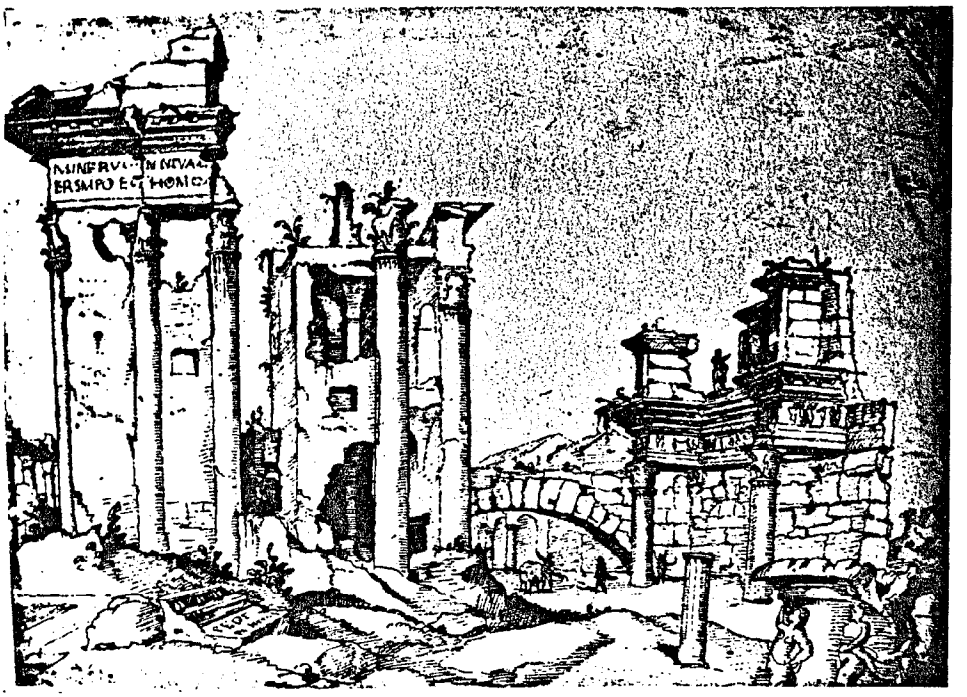


Fig. 1. Martin Van Heemskerck. View of the Forum of Nerva, 1532-1536.

Fig. 2. Martin Van Heemskerck. Self-portrait with the Coliseum, 1553.

Fig. 3. Etienne du Pérac. The Thermae of Caracalla, mid-sixteenth century.

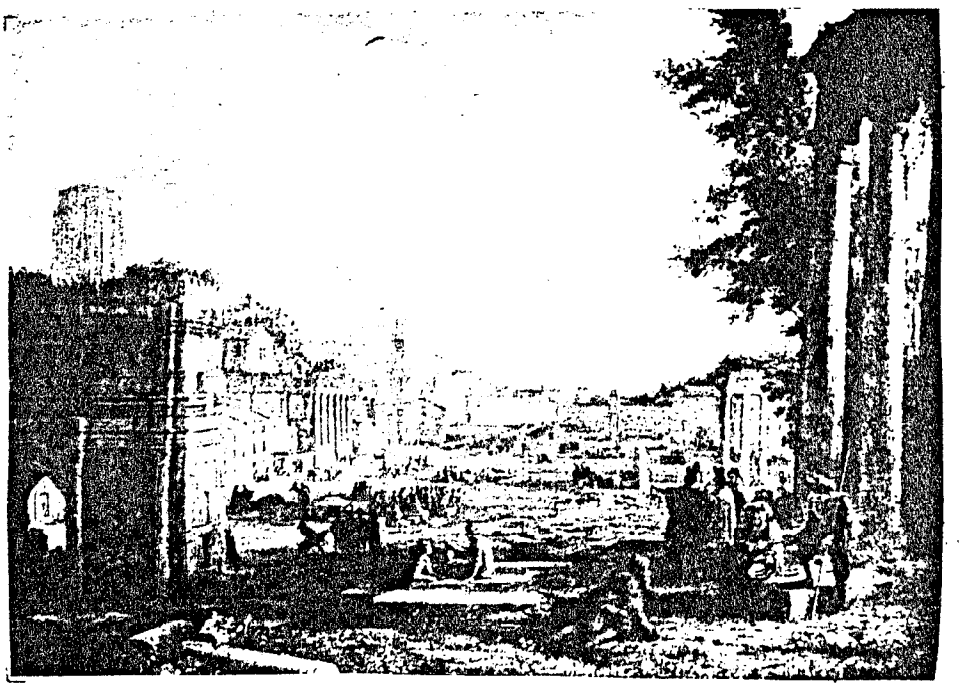


Fig. 4. Claude Lorrain. View of the Campo Vaccino, 1636.

Fig. 5. Louis-Nicolas Van Blarenberghe. Choiseul's cabinet or study, with ruin pictures by Hubert Robert. Detail of the Choiseul Box.

Fig. 6. Jean-Laurent Le Geay. Flight into Egypt, 1768.

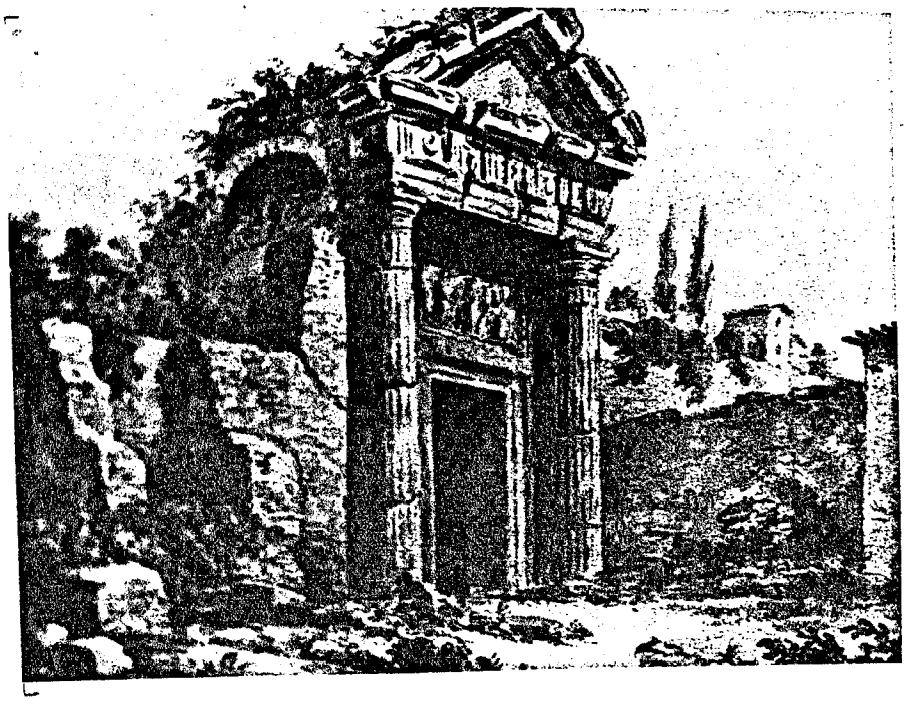


Fig. 7. Charles-Louis Clérisseau. Ruin with a doorway, ca. 1762.

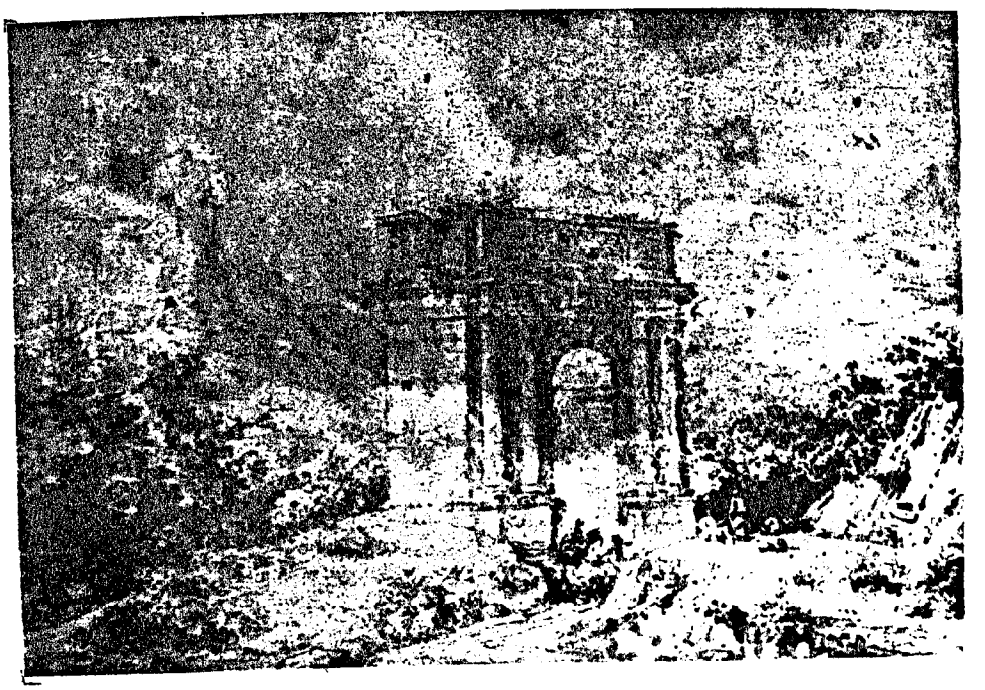


Fig. 8. Pierre- Adrien Pâris. The Arch of Susa.

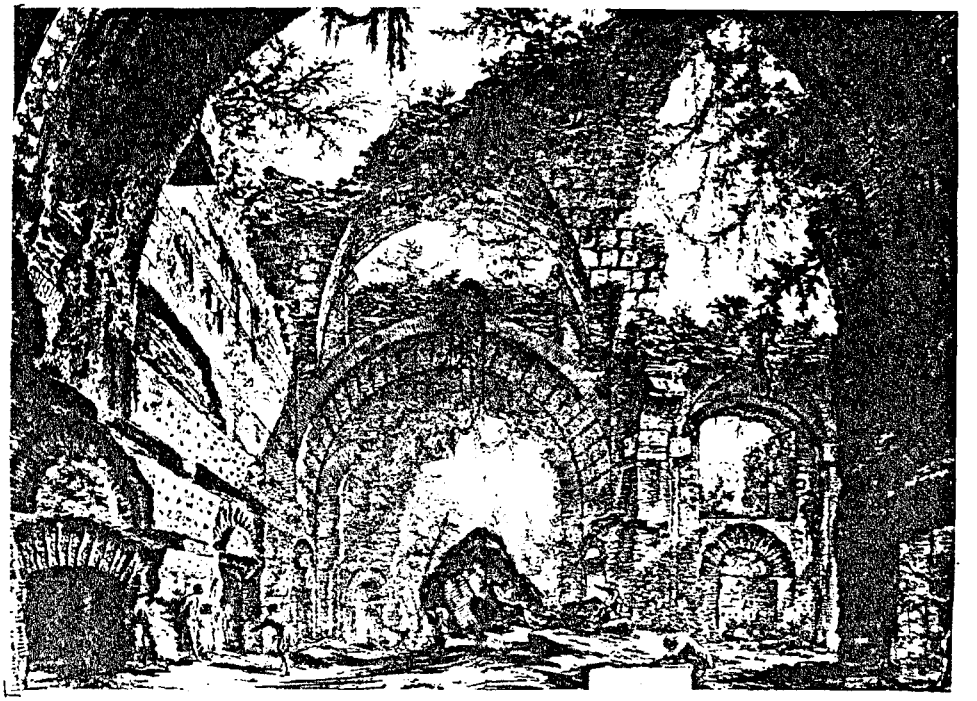


Fig. 9. Giovanni-Battista Piranesi. Frigidarium of the baths of Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, 1756.

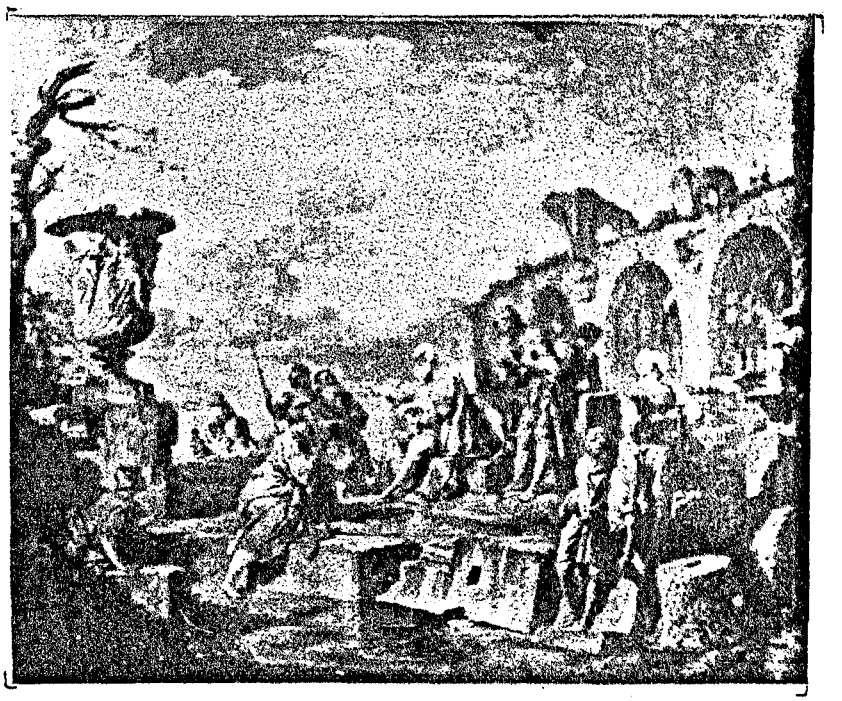


Fig. 10. Giovanni-Paolo Panini. Architectural ruin, 1740.

Fig. 11. Giovanni-Paolo Panini. Saint-Paul preaching among ruins.

Fig. 12.

Hubert Robert. Artist sketching the Farnese vase before the Coliseum.

Fig. 13.

Claude-Louis Chatelet. Artist sketching with the abbé de Saint-Non.

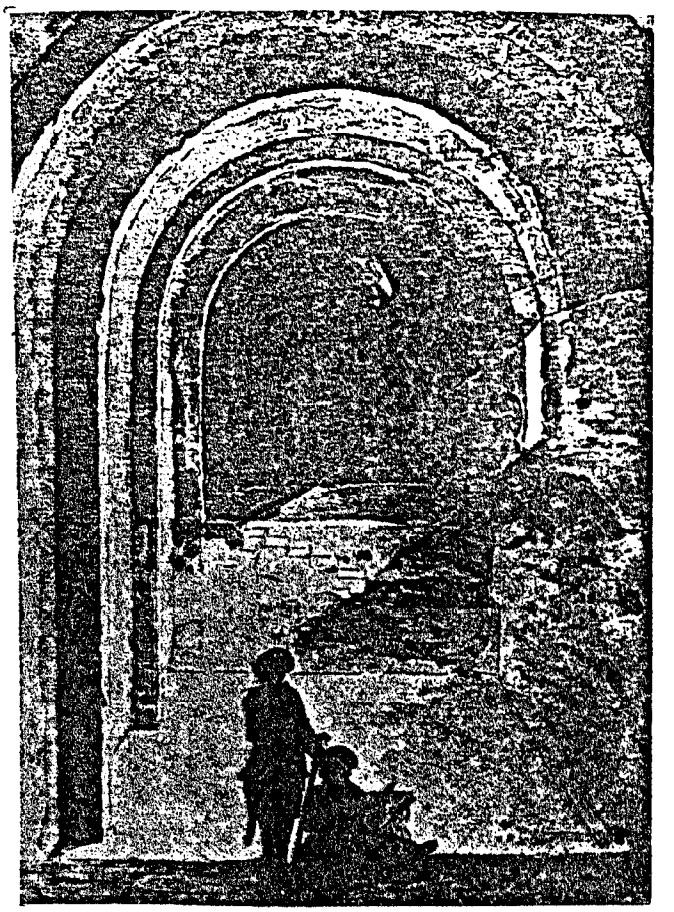


Fig. 14. François Boucher. Landscape with a watermill, 1743.

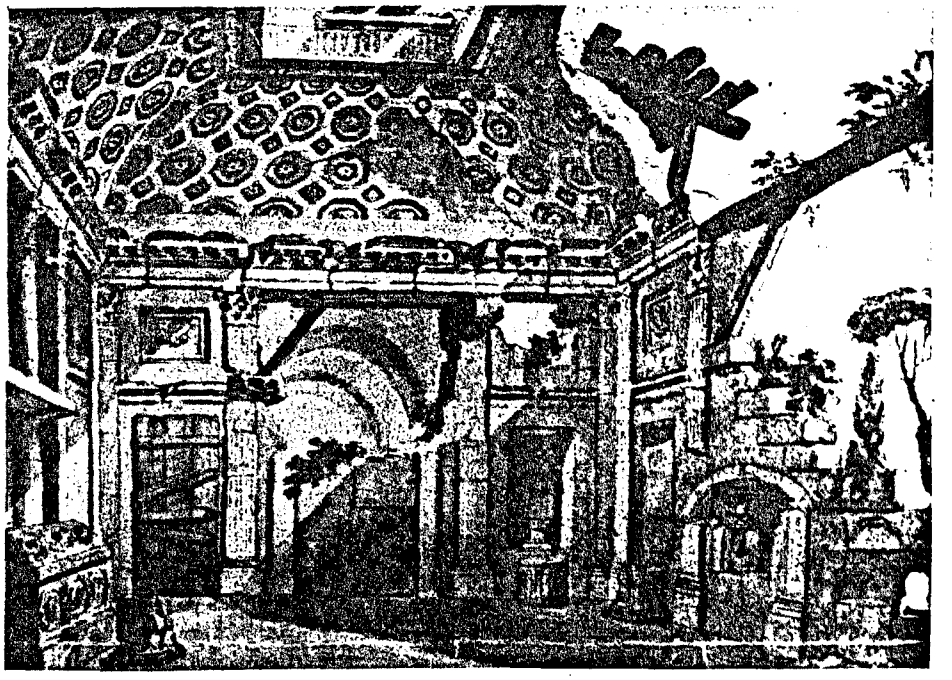


Fig. 15. Charles-Louis Clérisseau. Design for the Ruin Room at Trinità dei Monti, Rome, design executed in 1766.

Fig. 16.

Frontispiece of I Dieci Libri Dell'Architettura di M. Vitruvio. Barbaro edition. Venice, 1556.

Fig. 17.

Simon Vouet. Allegory of the Human Soul, ca. 1625.

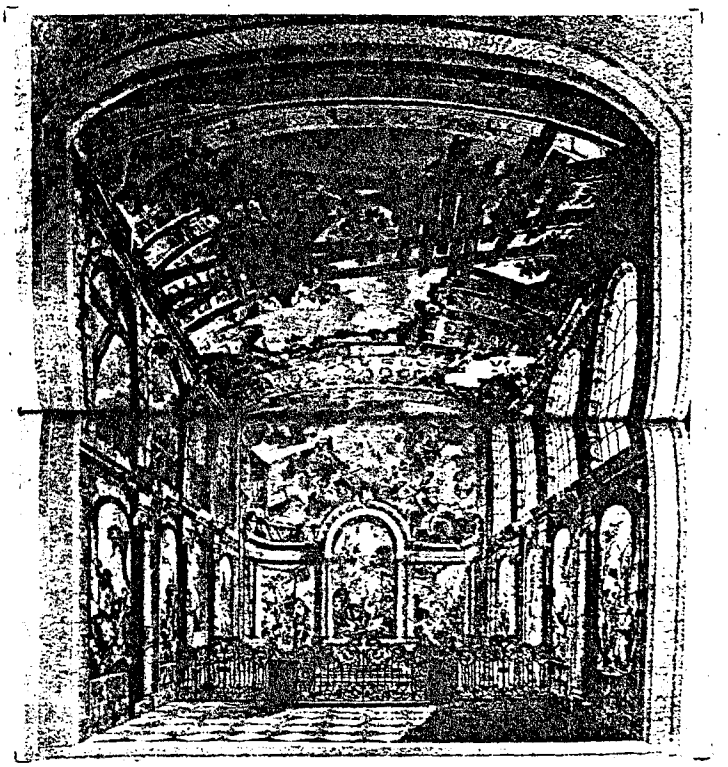


Fig. 18. Drawing by Augustin de Saint-Aubin, engraved by Fessard. Interior of the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, Paris, 1759.

Fig. 19. Joseph Vernet. Shipwreck, ca. 1740.

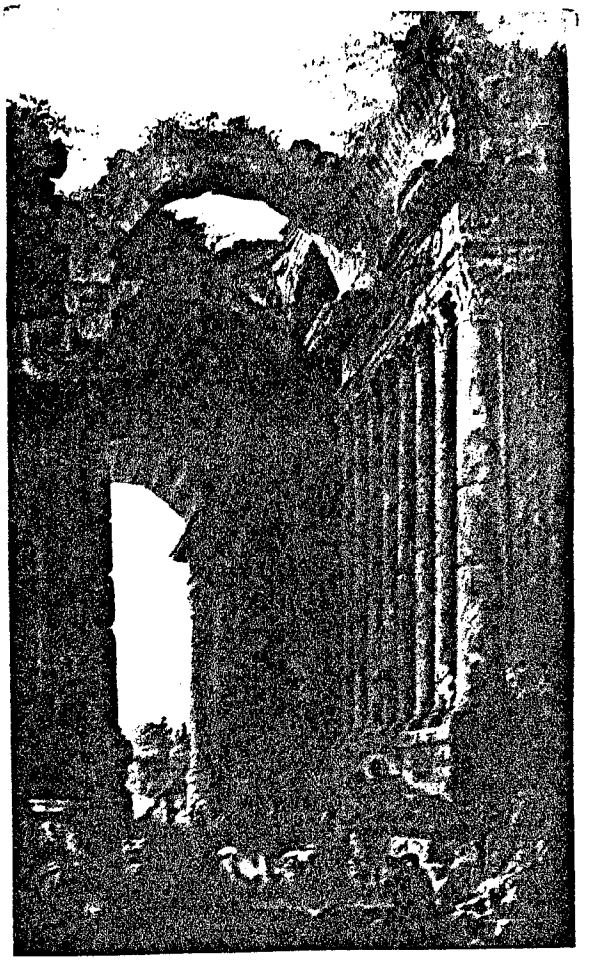


Fig. 20.

Hubert Robert. Ruins of a Roman temple, ca. 1780.

Fig. 21. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Parc Monceau, 1778.

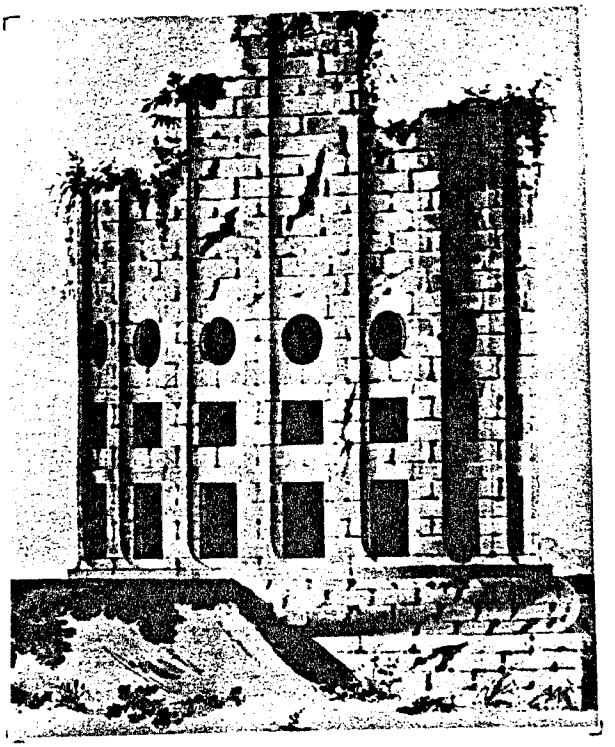


Fig. 22.

Drawing for a column-shaped residence, Désert de Retz, built in 1771.

Fig. 23.

The Gothic fortress, Parc de Betz.

Fig. 24. Francois Boucher. Design for a diploma for the Freemasons of Bordeaux, ca. 1756.

Fig. 25. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain after the fire of 1762.

Fig. 26. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain after the fire of 1762.

Fig. 27. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Six views of the ruins of the Foire Saint-Germain, 1762.

Fig. 28. Detail of the above.

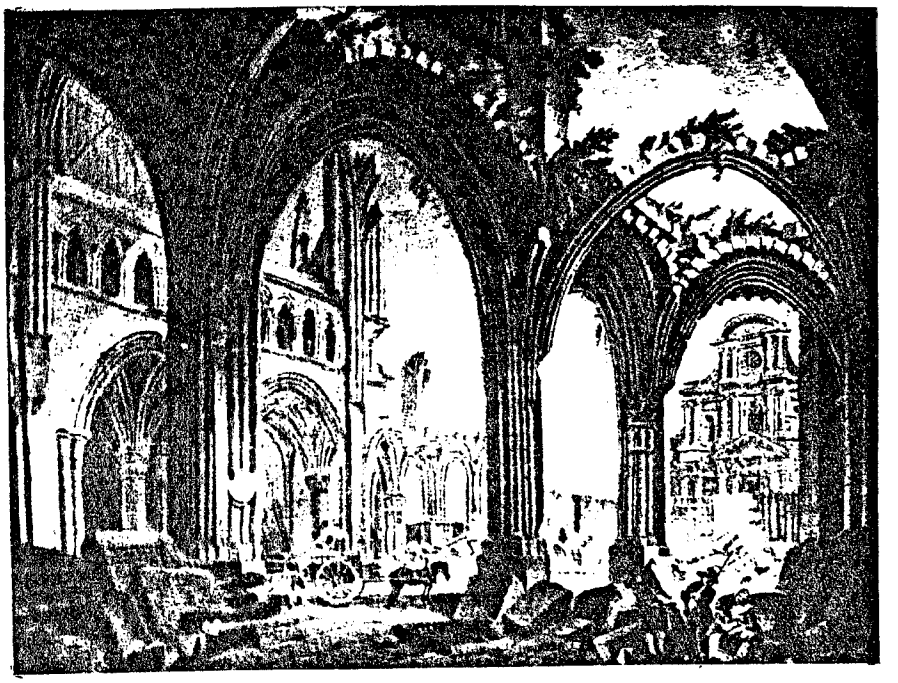


Fig. 29. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Demolition of Saint-Jean-en-Grève with Saint-Gervais in the background, ca. 1800.

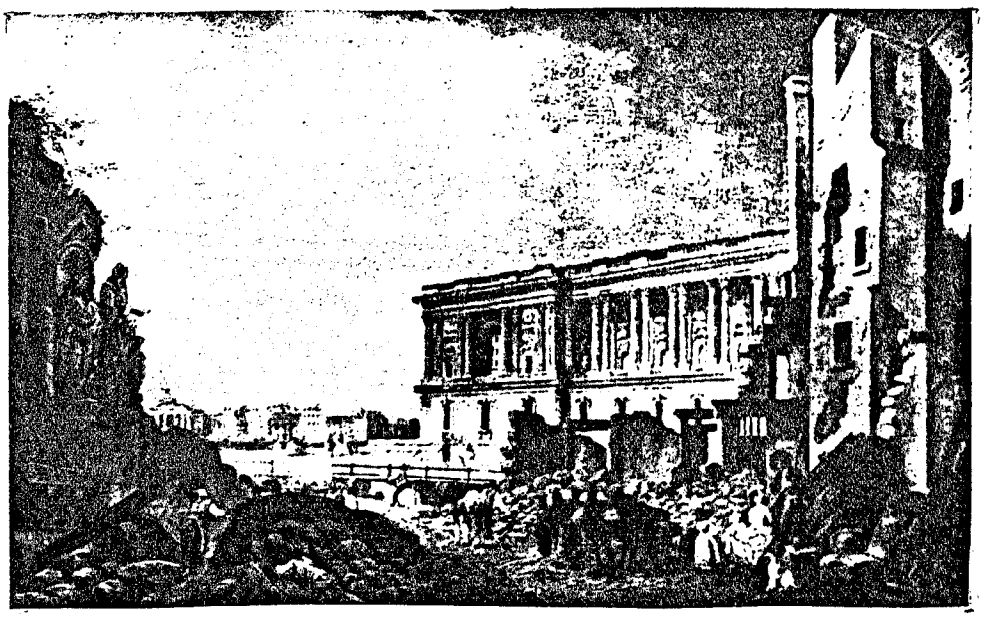


Fig. 30. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Clearing of the Louvre Colonnade, ca. 1758.

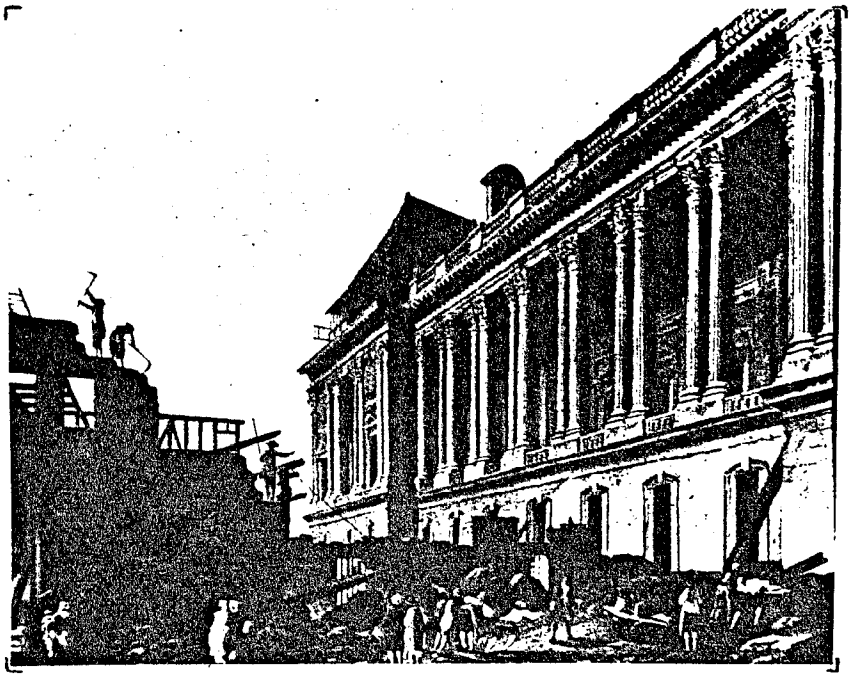


Fig. 31. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Clearing of the Louvre Colonnade, 1764.

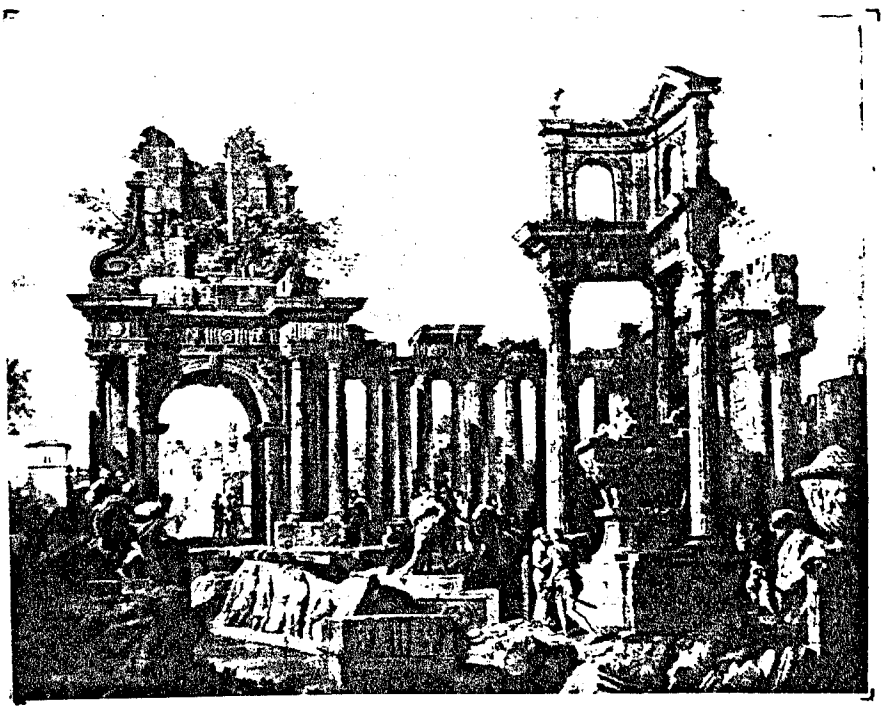


Fig. 32. Giovanni-Battista Panini. A Caprice with ruins, 1720.

Fig. 33. Drawing by Eisen, engraved by Le Bas. Frontispiece of La Font de Saint-Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état présent de la Peinture en France.

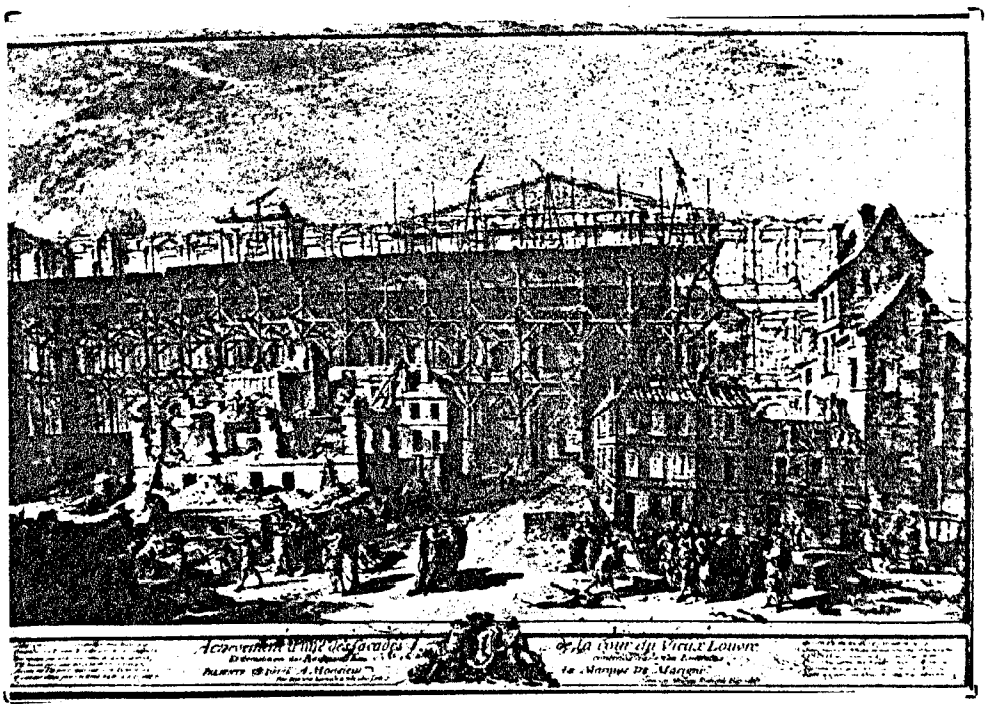


Fig. 34. Drawing by François Blondel, engraved by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. Démolition of houses in the Cour Carré, ca. 1755.

Fig. 35.

After Carmontelle. Portrait of Louis Petit de Bachaumont, 1761.

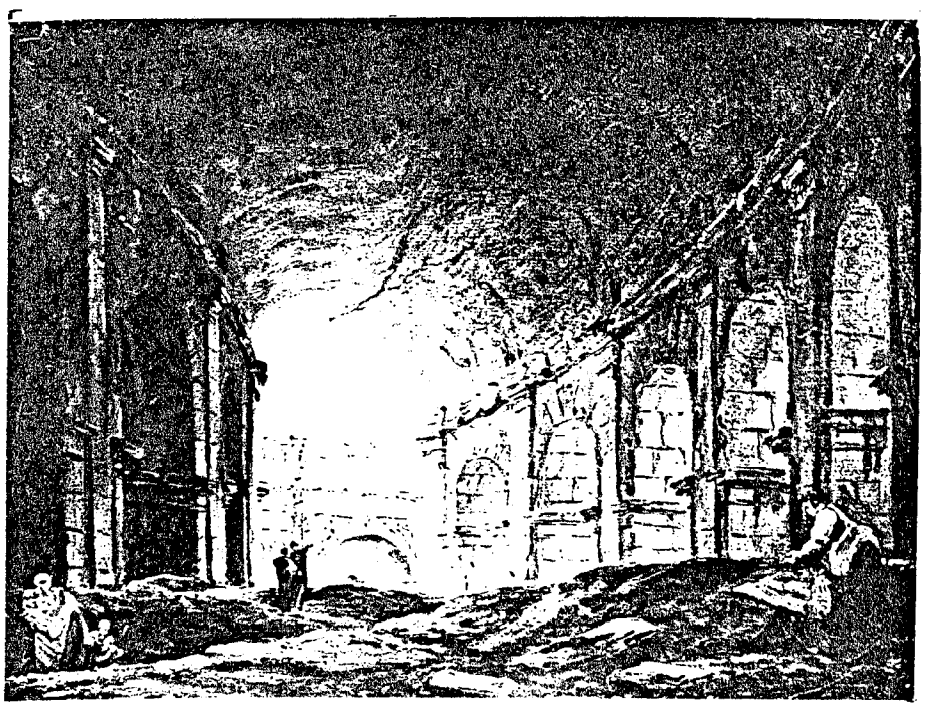


Fig. 36. Hubert Robert. Artist drawing in ruins, 1786.

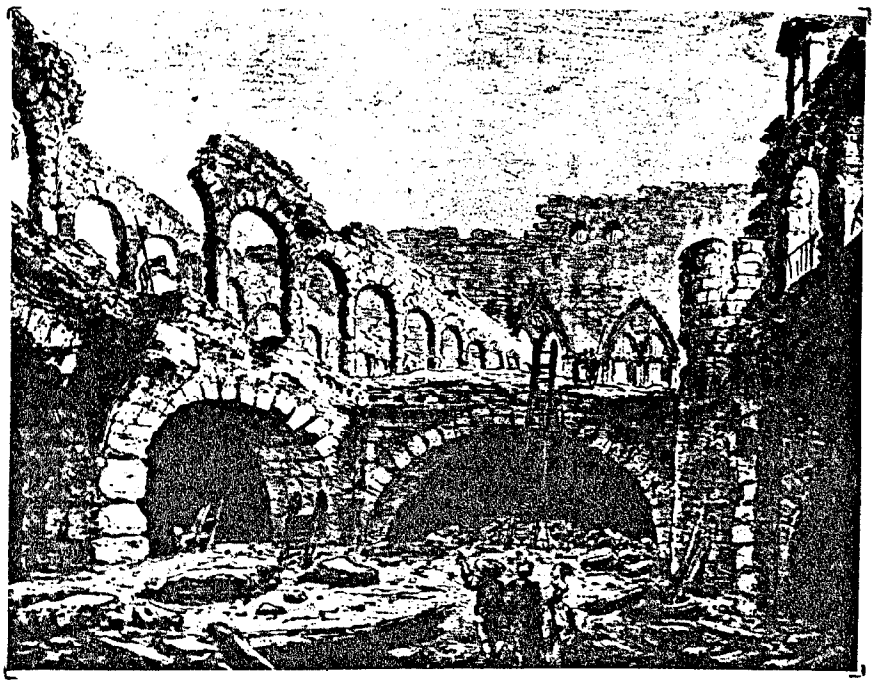


Fig. 37. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the slaughterhouse of the Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, after the fire of 1772.

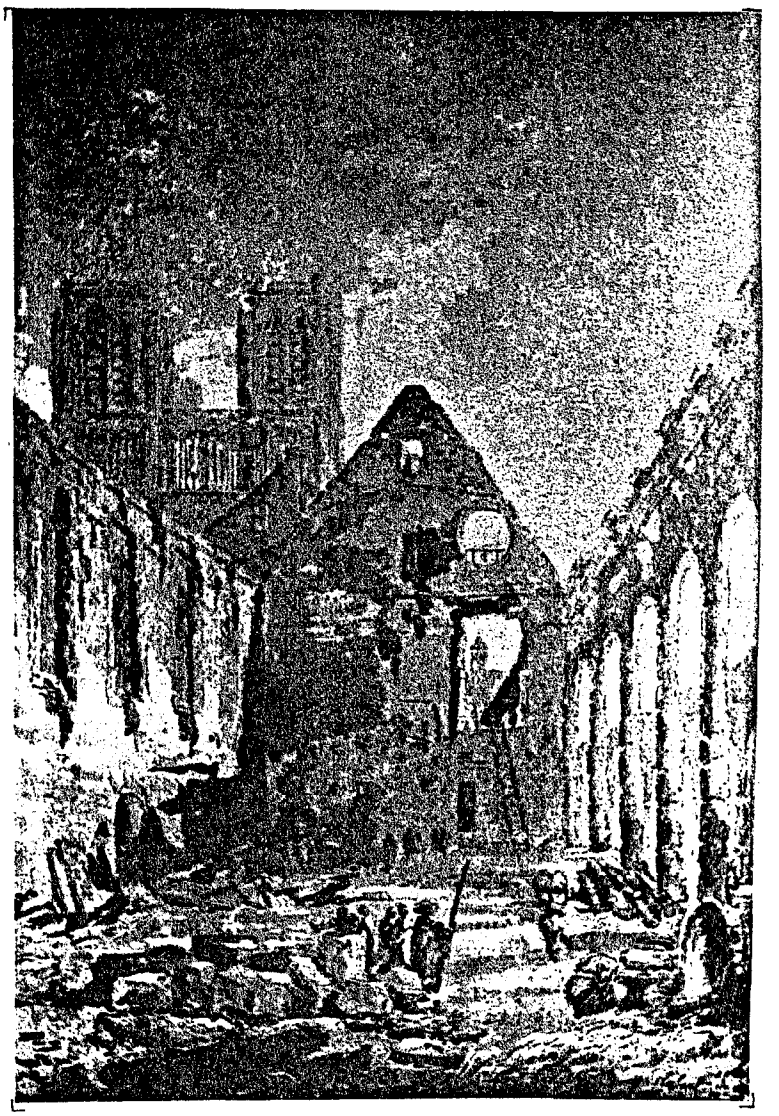


Fig. 38. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the Salle du Légat of the Hôtel-Dieu after the fire of 1772.

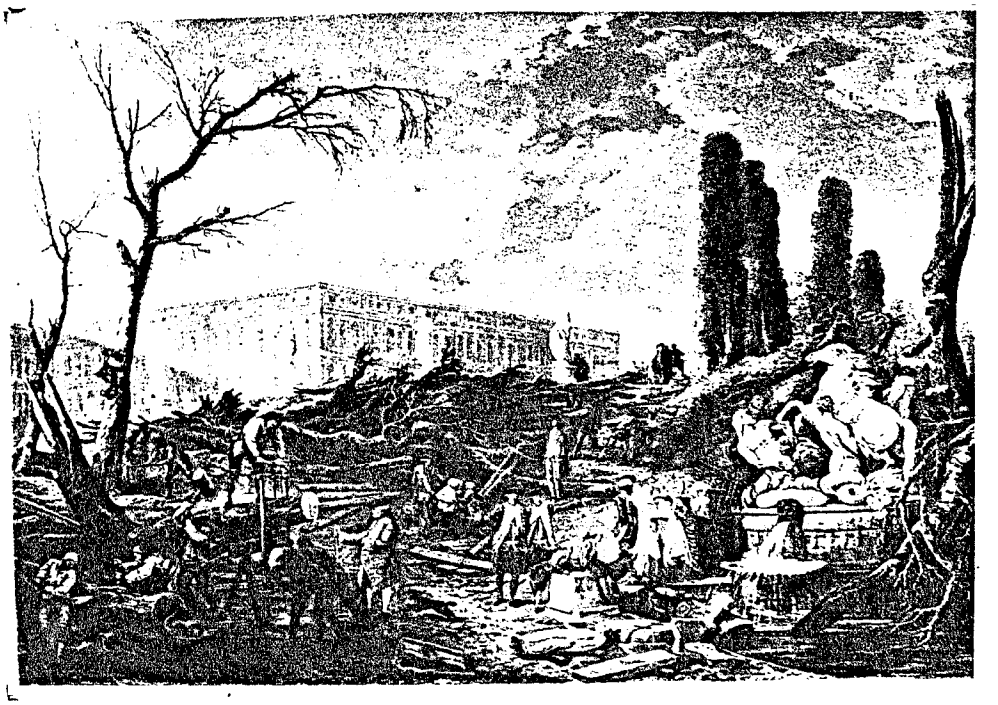


Fig. 39. Hubert Robert. Versailles. Demolition of the Bassin d'Apollon in 1775.

Fig. 40. Hubert Robert. Versailles. The Tapis Vert during the replanting of trees in 1774-1775.

Fig. 41. Hubert Robert. Ruins of the Palais-Royal Opera House after the fire of 1781.

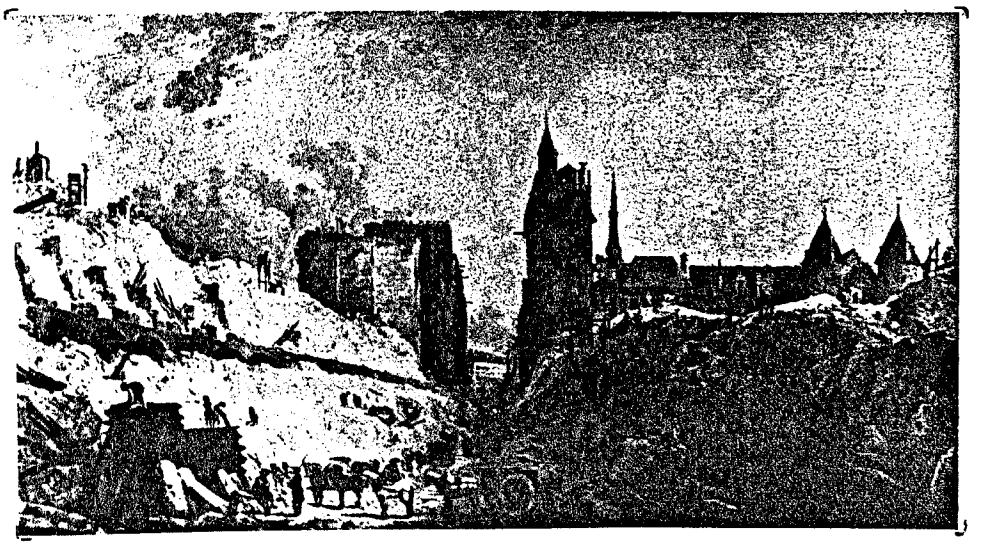


Fig. 42. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the houses on the Pont au Change in 1788.

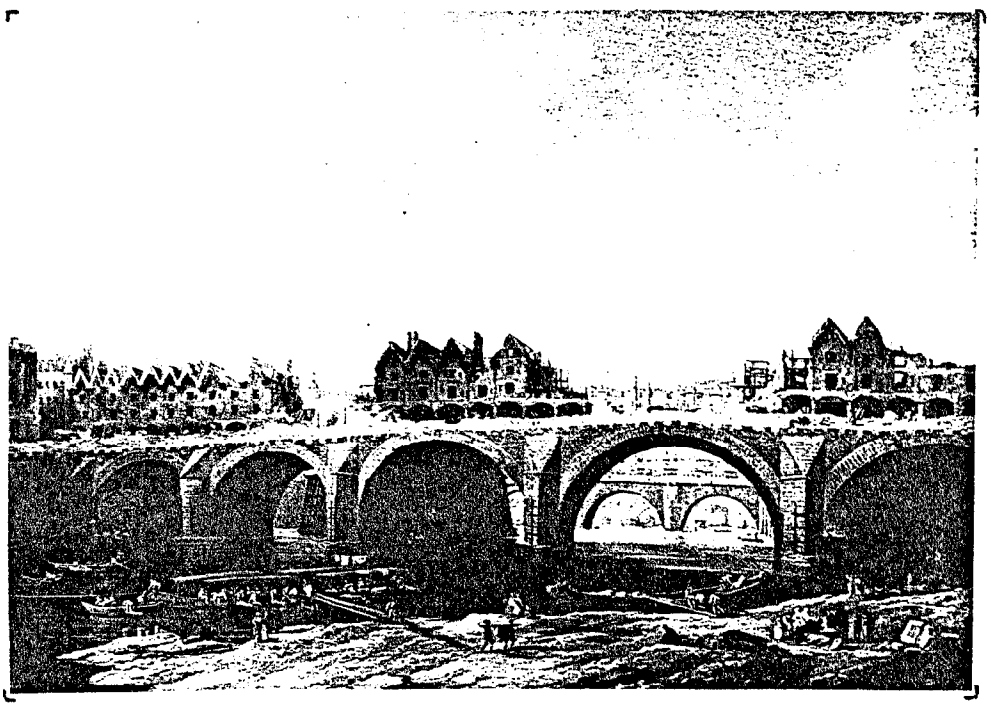


Fig. 43. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the houses on the Pont Notre-Dame in 1786.

Fig. 44. Balthazar Dunker. Frontispiece of Tableau de Paris, ou Explication de Différentes figures gravées à l'eau forte, pour servir aux différentes Editions du Tableau de Paris, par M. Mercier, 1787.

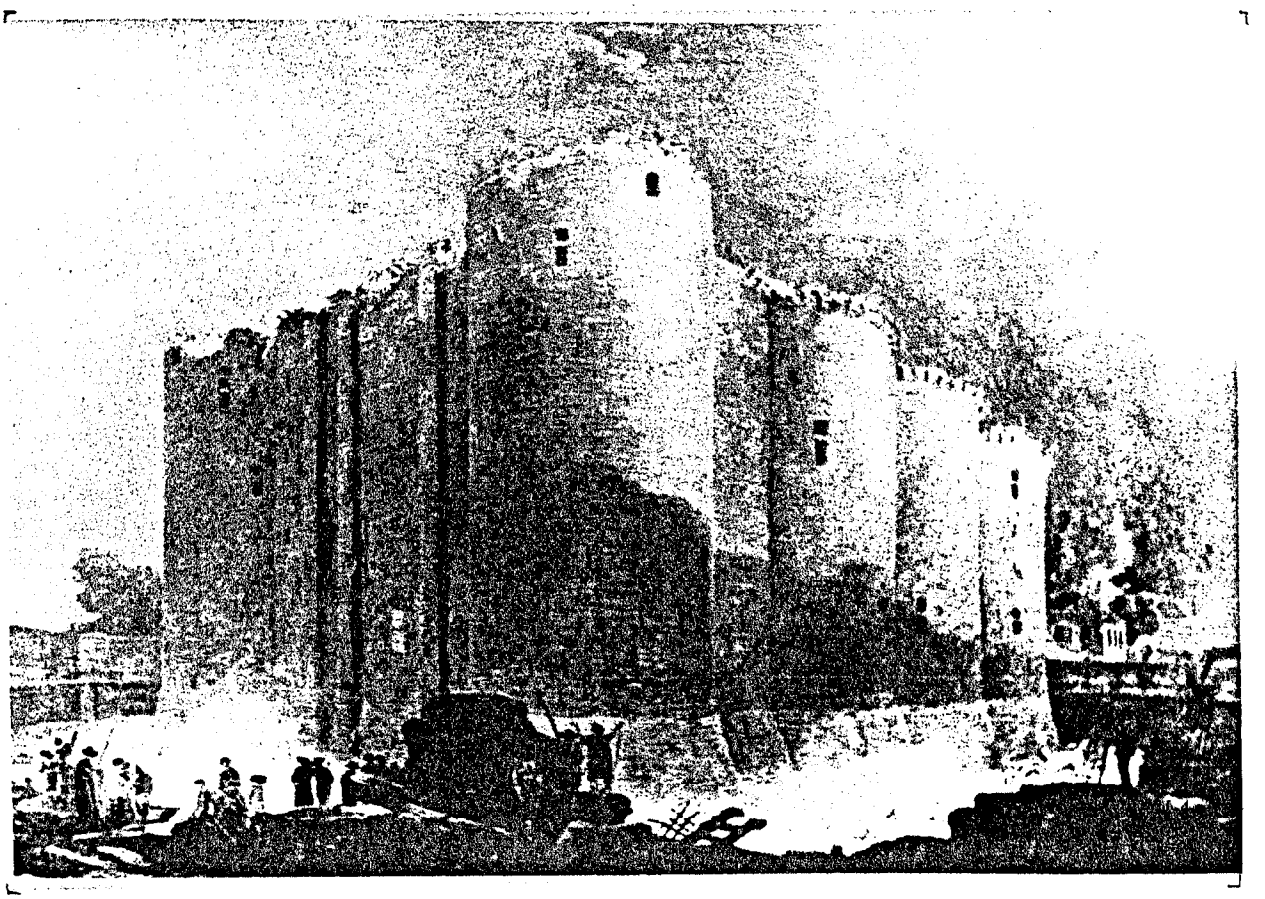


Fig. 45. Hubert Robert. The Bastille in the first days of its demolition, 1789.

Fig. 46. Anonymous. Allegory of the Revolution, ca. 1790.

Fig. 47. Hubert Robert. Grand Gallery of the Louvre imagined in ruins, 1790.

Fig. 48. Hubert Robert. Grand Gallery imagined as renovated as a public museum, 1790.

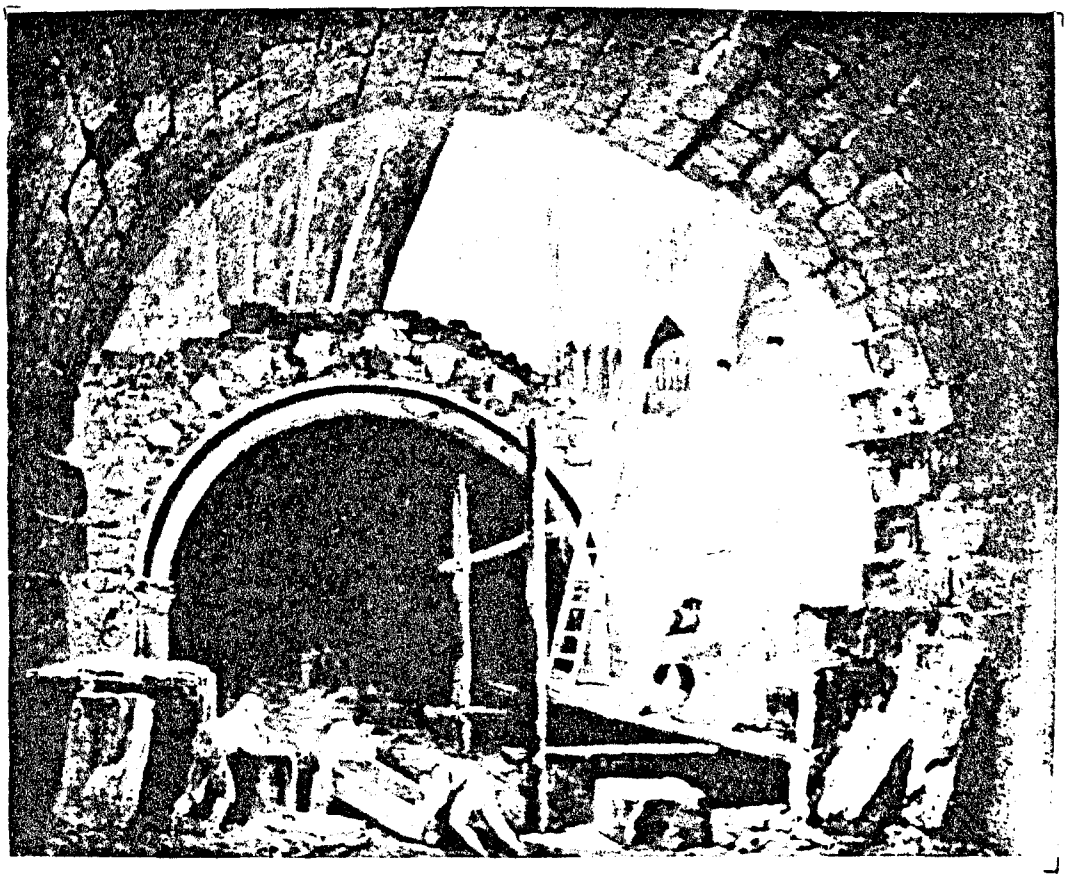


Fig. 49. Hubert Robert. Desecration of the Royal Tombs of Saint-Denis in 1793.

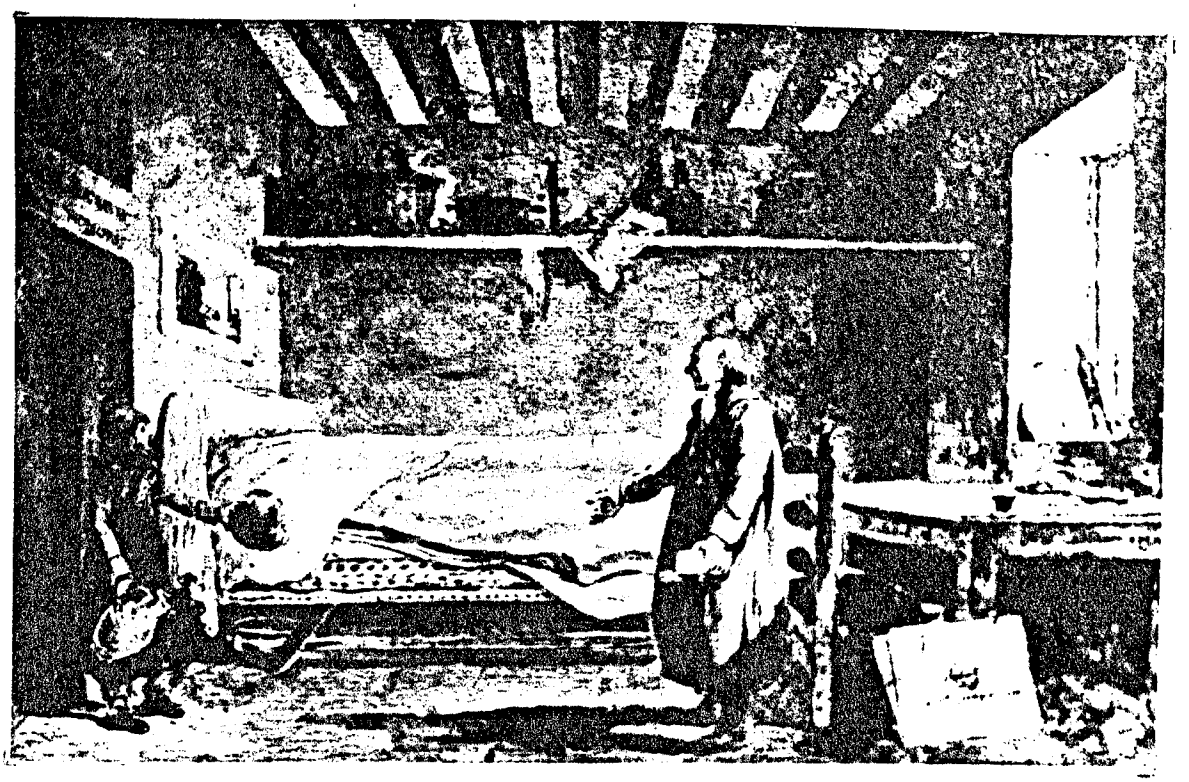


Fig. 50. Hubert Robert. Artist in his cell at Sainte-Pélagie Prison, 1793-1794.

Fig. 51. Hubert Robert. Demolition of Saint-Jean-en-Grève, 1797-1800.

Fig. 52. Hubert Robert. Demolition of Saint-Sauveur, ca. 1785.

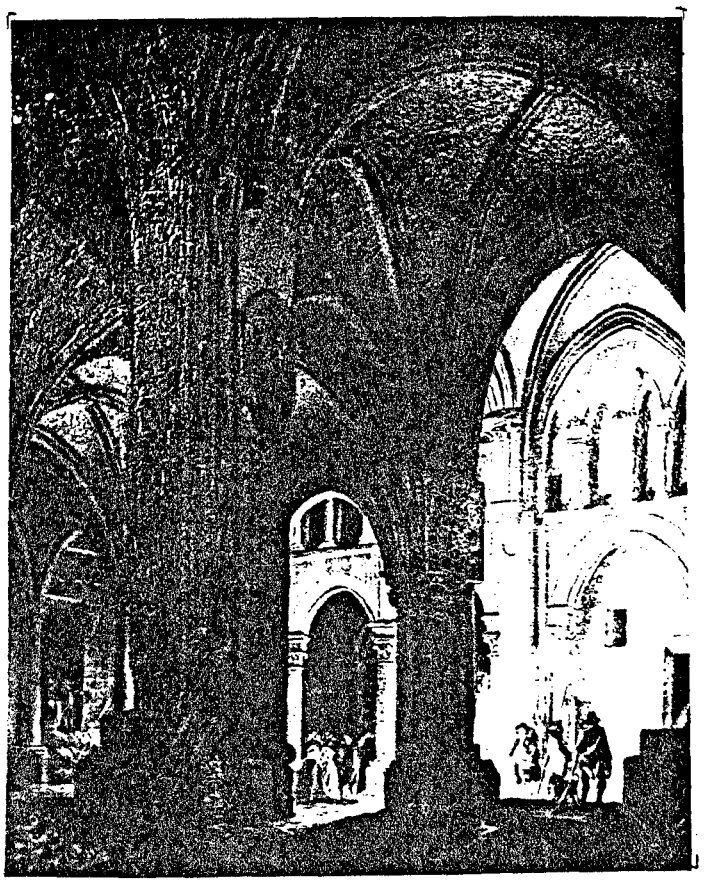


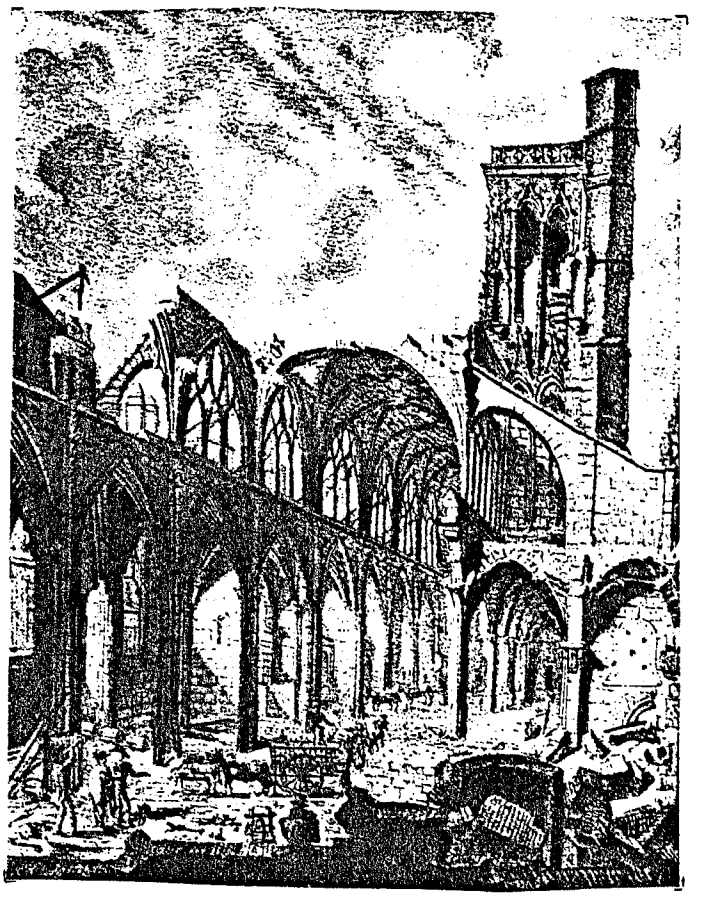
Fig. 53. Pierre-Antoine De Machy. Demolition of the Church of the Saints-Innocents, 1787.

Fig. 54.

Sarrasin. Demolition of the church of the Collège des Bernardins, ca. 1797.

Fig. 55.

Laglumé. Demolition of Saint-André-des-Arcs, ca. 1800.



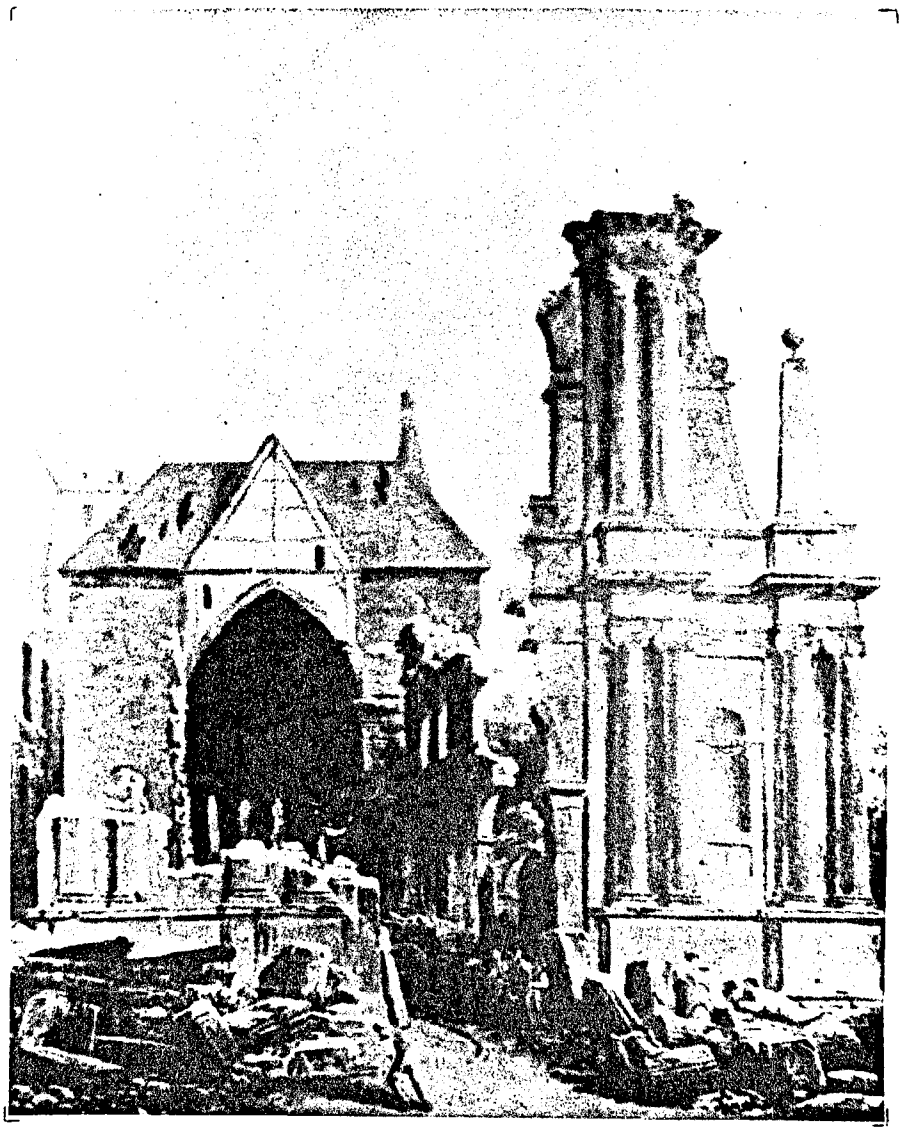


Fig. 56. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the Church of the Feuillants, ca. 1804.

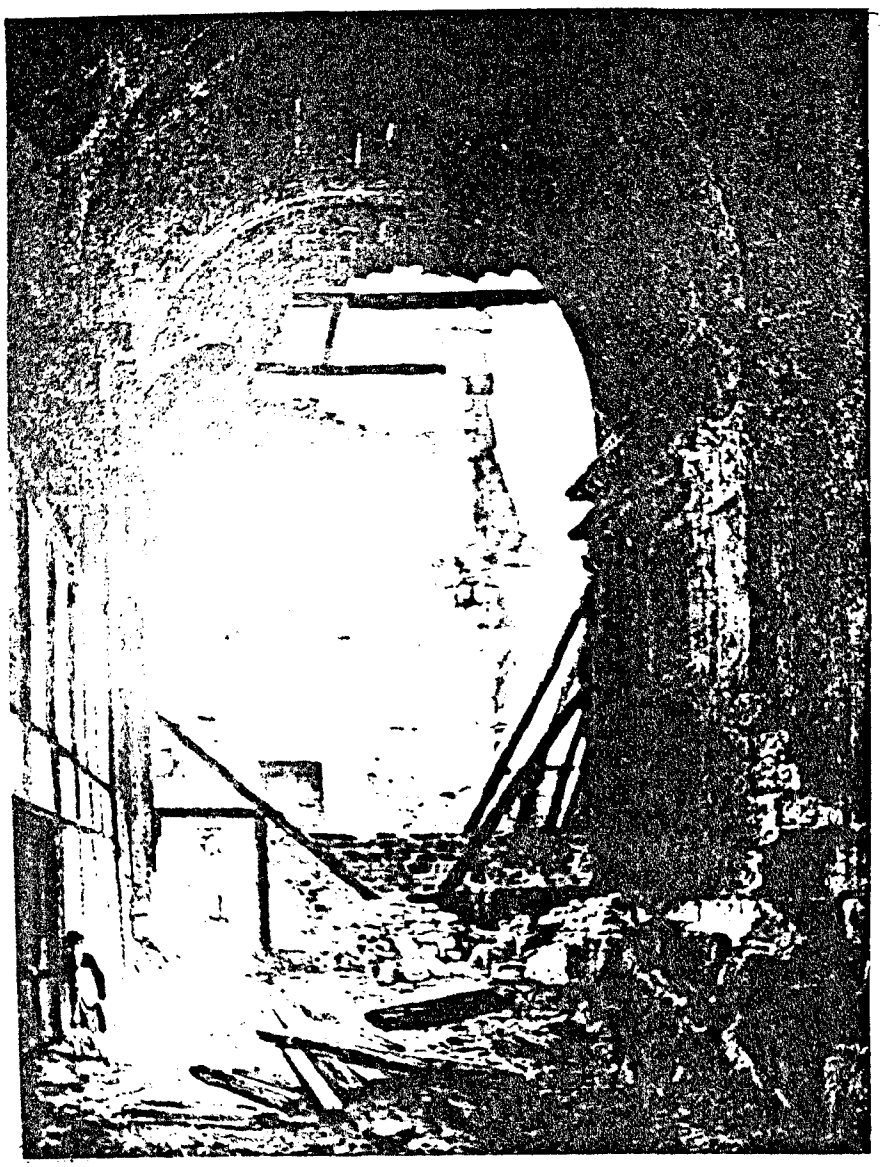


Fig. 57. Hubert Robert. Chapel of the Sorbonne imagined in ruins, ca. 1804.

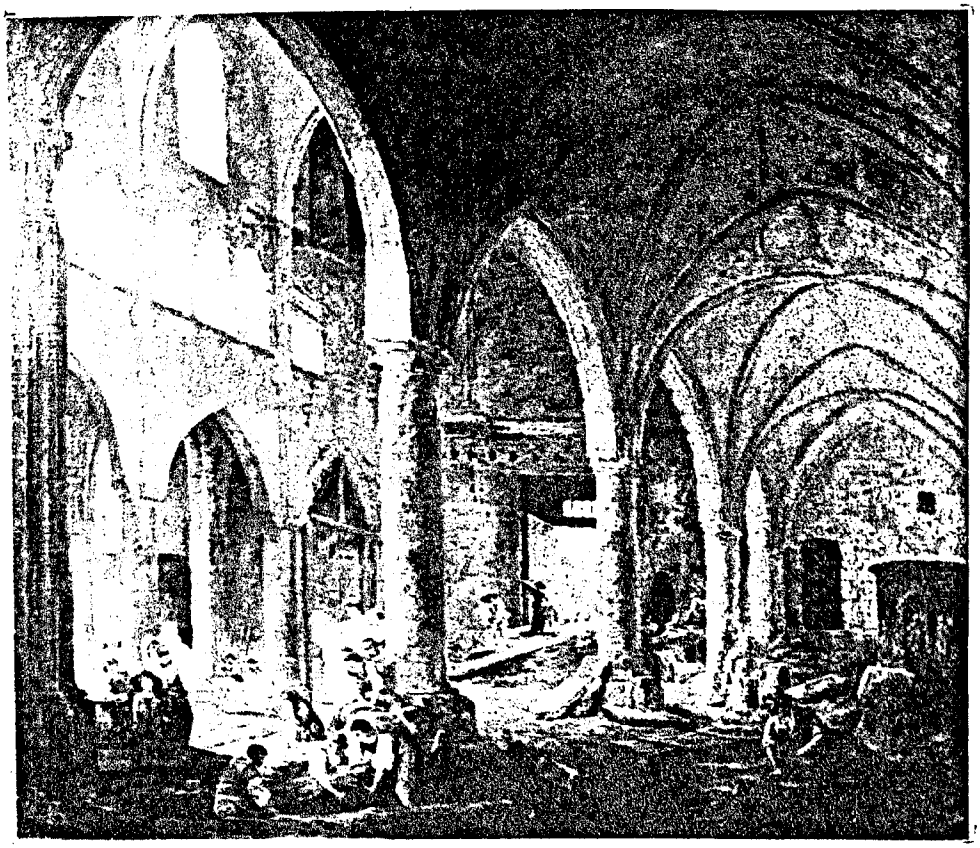


Fig. 58. Hubert Robert. Demolition of the Church of the Saints-Innocents, ca. 1787.