

THE WRITINGS OF VIOLET-LE-DUC: ARCHITECT AND
NATIONALIST

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of
Birmingham for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

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January 2025

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Abstract

This thesis explores the nationalist dimensions of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's (1814-1879) architectural theory and practice through a broad analysis of his literary works, including his contributions to the *Annales archéologiques* (1844-1849), his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle* (1854-1868), and *Entretiens sur l'architecture* (1863-1872) to name but a few. While previous scholars have touched upon nationalist undercurrents in certain of his writings, this study posits that he was a nationalist outright who authored explicitly nationalist works from the beginning to the end of his career, and that they served to justify his rationalist doctrine and purist approach to architectural restoration; both of which contrasted with mainstream contemporary ideas and methodologies. This thesis shows how in response to the maligning of medieval architecture perpetuated by the likes of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, the bastion of Classical arts and ideas in France, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that the Gothic alone corresponded with the social, political, religious, geographic, climatic, and even racial contexts of the French nation, acting as a conduit for its creative vitality. Appropriating contemporary ideas in racial theory and evolutionary biology, Viollet-le-Duc asserted the universality and scientific nature of his rationalist doctrine, which demanded that the forms of national architecture relate intimately to their function, and that stylistic composites be homogenised or purified, even at the cost of rewriting

historical narratives. The idea of restoring Gothic monuments to their supposed original or ideal state by purging them of Classical, Byzantine, Romanesque, Baroque, and Neoclassical modifications played into rising nationalist sentiments of the day, heightened by waves of revolutionary upheaval (1830, 1848), the declaration of the Second French Empire (1852), and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). Viollet-le-Duc portrayed the Eclectic restoration approach of his peers, which drew much from the developments of the Italian Renaissance, as an abuse of logical construction principles, a disregard for good sense, and above all a symbol of anti-nationality. He argued that in France, and indeed all countries, the cultivation of pure national architecture was a means of unshackling the national genius and warding off degeneration in the arts, industry, and civilization at large. By foregrounding Viollet-le-Duc's nationalism, this thesis not only reframes his contributions to architectural theory and practice, but also underlines the ways in which his work intersected with and reflected broader political and intellectual currents. From this perspective, his restorations are seen as both a literal and symbolic act of national reclamation, deeply intertwined with the shaping of modern French national identity. This thesis thus contributes to a broader understanding of Viollet-le-Duc's lasting impact on French architectural heritage and his role as a nationalist figure within the intellectual and cultural fabric of nineteenth and twenty-first-century French society alike.

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Introduction

Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) is best remembered for his work on the restoration of medieval French monuments such as the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris (1845-1864, Fig. 0.1), the citadel of Carcassonne (1853-1879, Fig. 0.2), and Pierrefonds castle (1858-1879, Figs. 0.3 and 0.4), notwithstanding his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle* (1854-1868), among other significant texts dealing with the theory and history of architecture. Despite many of his restorations being deemed too invasive, subjective, and transformative, notions which will be explored in depth in this thesis, the consensus among past and present scholars surrounding Viollet-le-Duc is that he contributed much to the study of medieval architecture, and that many of France's most famous medieval monuments only stand today because of his work.¹ As put by Paul Gout (1852-1923) in 1914, Viollet-le-Duc was 'an architect, an archaeologist, a writer, a thinker, and above all, an innovator in all the branches of his inexhaustible activity'; he could easily have succeeded as a politician, a

¹ Hubert Damisch, *Viollet-le-Duc : L'Architecture raisonnée : Extraits du dictionnaire de l'architecture française*, (Herman, 1964), p. 7; [Anon.], 'The President's Address,' *The Builder*, 37 (1879), pp. 1339-1341 (p. 1339).

geologist, a doctor, or a general.² What is not typically said of Viollet-le-Duc, however, is that he was a nationalist who authored works of nationalist propaganda bearing on architecture, a claim which this thesis will make and evince primarily through analyses and interpretations of a broad sample of his literary corpus.

Architectural restoration from a nationalist perspective

At the forefront of Viollet-le-Duc's nationalist assertions was that the French had an exclusive claim on the creation and development of Gothic architecture, one of which they ought to be proud. He rested this claim on the basis that the stylistic and structural dispositions of the Gothic were uniquely developed to satisfy the demands of French mores, beliefs, racial character, socio-political inclination, and geoclimatic environment. This deterministic relation between form and function constitutes rationalism, a notion which featured ubiquitously in Viollet-le-Duc's writings, as will be shown in this thesis. As the symbol and manifestation of a new national entity, born in the twelfth century from a racial, spiritual, and socio-political

² « Architecte, archéologue, écrivain, penseur, et par dessus [*sic*] tout, novateur dans toutes les branches de son inépuisable activité », Paul Gout, *Viollet-le-Duc : Sa vie, son œuvre, sa doctrine* (Édouard Champion, 1914), p. xii.

All translations from French language texts are my own.

coalescence, Viollet-le-Duc posited that it was not only feasible but essential to differentiate and disconnect the Gothic from earlier and later Classical architectural traditions such as the Romanesque, Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical styles.³ Leveraging the contemporary pseudoscientific principle of racialism in addition to developments in evolutionary biology, both of which played a pivotal role in nineteenth-century nationalist discourses, Viollet-le-Duc contended that all architecture shared rational roots. He used the ideas of polygenist Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) and zoologist and naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) in particular, to lend an air of universality and scientific weight to his rational theory of architecture. He did not, however, see the quality of structurality, which predicates the meaning of a system's parts upon their relation to the whole, as a universal architectural principle, as with rationalism, reserving it instead for Gothic architecture as a means of distinguishing it from other, especially Classical styles.

Resonating with nineteenth-century ideas of national and racial hierarchy, Viollet-le-Duc proclaimed the superiority of the French, particularly in contrast to the Italians, whose Eclectic architecture, from the Middle Ages up to modernity, he argued was a reflection of their socio-political fragmentation and superficial sense of nationality. As such, he

³ Descriptions of these architectural styles will be given in subsequent pages.

repeatedly lamented the denationalisation and Italianisation of French arts begun by Louis XIV (1643-1715) and perpetuated by the likes of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and its instructional organ the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris, who valued Classical architecture and maligned the Gothic. Viollet-le-Duc saw this suppression of national arts to have had lasting negative effects on the originality and vitality of France's arts and industry, not to mention the power of the people's voice. He likened the contemporary architectural landscape in France to that of the tower of Babel, suited only for producing 'the strangest cacophony' of works, and hardly a representation of unified national genius, especially in comparison to France's neighbours.⁴ Despite initially arguing that national architecture need only satisfy rational considerations, he later added that it should identify with a nation's ideal conception of itself, as a means of actuating its potential. He was careful to emphasize that his sentiments reflected a broader contemporary movement, according to which European populations in particular were motivated by scientific and philosophical drives to comprehend the nature of the world and the individual. By extension, they were eager to discard the constraints of Classical

⁴ « La plus étrange cacophonie », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'L'Enseignement des Arts. — Il y a quelque chose à faire (*premier article*)', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1st ser., 12.5 (1862), pp. 393-402, (p. 394).

architecture which pervaded the continent and indeed the modern world, and rediscover or fabricate pure national architecture that celebrated rather than smothered the qualities unique to their national identity.

However, redeeming the Gothic at the expense of Classical architecture, engendering national pride, and remedying or preventing the degeneration of French society were not the only aims of Viollet-le-Duc's engagement with nationalism in his writings. This thesis considers how the arguments he presented provided him with a means of supporting the legitimacy of his restoration methodology, which was contrary to mainstream nineteenth-century practices. As will be considered in more depth shortly, Viollet-le-Duc's restorations were typically shaped by his 'passion for unity,' and he rarely 'tolerated mixtures' of architectural style, putting him at variance with his peers, whose approach was less invasive and more tolerant of stylistic diversity.⁵ In *Viollet-le-Duc : Ses travaux d'art et son système archéologique* from 1881, archaeologist Anthyme Saint-Paul (1843-1911) quipped: 'woe to the Romanesque monument that sprouted an ogival steeple, woe to a church of the thirteenth century surrounded by lateral

⁵ « Passion de l'unité », « tolérait les mélanges », Anthyme Saint-Paul, *Viollet-Le-Duc : Ses travaux d'art et son système archéologique* (Bureaux de l'Année archéologique, 1881), p. 45.

chapels and furnished or decorated in the Classical manner!’⁶ Saint-Paul emphasised that Viollet-le-Duc favoured a ‘clean slate on all posterior additions or decorations, and if it was necessary to write on this subject, the epithets did not lack to stigmatise the more or less real ugliness of these superfluities,’ intimating how Viollet-le-Duc’s writings served to vindicate his unorthodox restoration tendencies.⁷

⁶ « Malheur au monument roman qui poussait un clocher ogival, malheur à une église du treizième siècle entourée de chapelles latérales et meublée ou décorée à la manière classique ! », Ibid; Ogival is often used as a synonym for Gothic, however an ogive is technically ‘the diagonal rib in Gothic vaults’. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, ed. by Cyril Harris (Dover Publications, 1977), p. 384; Romanesque designates the style of architecture emerging in eleventh-century Western Europe as an offshoot of Roman and Byzantine traditions, ‘characterized by massive articulated wall structures, round arches, and powerful vaults’. Ibid., p. 461.

⁷ « Table rase sur toute addition ou décoration postérieure, et s’il fallait écrire à ce sujet, les épithètes ne manquaient pas pour stigmatiser la laideur plus ou moins réelle de ces superfétations », Saint-Paul, p. 45.

Viollet-le-Duc, the Gothicists, and the Beaux-Arts

Despite circumventing the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris as a young man, the unofficial rite of passage for budding artists in nineteenth-century France, Viollet-le-Duc's instinct for architecture and 'impressive mastery' of drawing, notwithstanding his family's connection to the likes of Inspector-General of Historical Monuments Prosper Merimée, secured his entry into the restoration profession at just 26 years old in 1840.⁸ Within a decade, he had distinguished himself as an architect of international renown by his work on the restoration of medieval monuments such as the Sainte-Chapelle (Figs. 0.5 and 0.6), the abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay (Figs. 0.7 and 0.8), the city hall of Narbonne (Fig. 0.9), the citadel of Carcassonne, and the cathedrals of Notre-Dame de Paris and Notre-Dame d'Amiens (Fig. 0.10).⁹ It was also during this period that he began his career as an author on the history and theory of architecture, an endeavour in which he was equally prolific, and which enabled him to buttress his restoration approach by exhibiting and defending his doctrines.¹⁰ The

⁸ [Anon.], 'The Late Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc,' *The Builder*, 37 (1879), pp. 1068-1069 (p. 1068); Georges Poisson and Olivier Poisson, *Eugène Viollet-le-Duc : 1814-1879* (A. & J. Picard, 2014), p. 17, 74.

⁹ 'The Late Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc,' (p. 1068).

¹⁰ Ibid.

Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle, the *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, and the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine : Depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* are among his more widely known publications, as they were during his lifetime.¹¹ His appointment as an Inspector-general of diocesan edifices in 1853 and member of the commission of historic monuments in 1860, not to mention the patronage and confidence of Emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873), granted him ever-increasing authority and autonomy with his projects.¹² Toward the end of his career, he undertook the restorations of such Gothic monuments as Pierrefonds castle and the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Reims (Fig. 0.11), notwithstanding numerous original constructions in or evoking the Gothic style, including the castle of La Flachère (Fig. 0.12), the church of Aillant-sur-Tholon (Fig. 0.13), and several town houses across Paris (Fig. 0.14).

Indeed, it was Gothic architecture in particular which captivated Viollet-le-Duc at a young age, and to whose indefatigable study he would

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Poisson and Poisson, p. 208; Saint-Paul, p. 11; 'Eugène Viollet-le-Duc,' La compagnie des Architectes en Chef des Monuments Historiques, n.d. <<https://www.compagnie-acmh.fr/viollet-le-duc/>> [Accessed 25 October 2024]

devote most of his life.¹³ This architecture, which is also termed pointed, ogive, or Christian, flourished in Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and is characterised by ‘the pointed arch, the rib vault, the development of the exterior flying buttress, and the gradual reduction of the walls to a system of richly decorated fenestration’.¹⁴ Viollet-le-Duc himself worked on some of Europe’s most exemplary Gothic edifices such as the cathedrals of Notre-Dame de Paris and Notre-Dame de Reims. His impressment with the Gothic, however, was part of the larger romantic phenomenon which emerged in Europe between the end of the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth century as a reaction, stoked by the French and industrial revolutions, against ‘religious tradition, political absolutism, and a hierarchical social system’ rooted in enlightenment notions of reason and order.¹⁵ One of the products of this movement was an increased fascination with and depiction of ancient and medieval ruins in the arts and letters, which symbolised that ‘man did not stand above and against nature,

¹³ Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 1814–1879* (Routledge, 2017), p. 29.

¹⁴ *Illustrated Dictionary*, p. 254.

¹⁵ Jacob Leib Talmon, *Romanticism and Revolt: Europe, 1815-1848* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 136.

but was part of its progress,' both 'within himself and outside himself.'¹⁶ Beginning in Britain, this fascination soon spread to the continent and contributed simultaneously to the development of the nascent field of archaeology, and a renewed interest in the visual culture of the Middle Ages, both of which continued to inform one another throughout the century and beyond.¹⁷ In France, romantic novels such as Victor Hugo's (1802-1885) *Notre-Dame de Paris*, published in 1831, played a vital role in galvanising both the study of archaeology and the phenomenon of Gothicism; defined as the 'attraction for the Gothic style and the spirit of its artists,' or the 'conformity or devotion to the Gothic style in the arts,' especially architecture.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁷ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle,' *Annales archéologiques*, 1 (1844), pp. 334-347 (pp. 334-335).

¹⁸ Bressani, p. 110, 131; « Attrait pour le style gothique et l'esprit de ses artistes », 'Gothisme,' Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, n.d. < <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/gothisme> > [Accessed 25 October 2024]; 'Gothicism,' Merriam-Webster, n.d. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gothicism>> [Accessed 25 October 2024]; 'Gothicism,' Collins, n.d.

It should be noted that the term Gothicist is rather an appellation than an official designation, used by Martin Bressani and David Van Zanten among others to refer to individuals who studied and extolled the unique virtues of the Gothic and advocated for its revitalisation in the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Among those who may be defined as such are Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Merimée (1803-1870), Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), Adolphe-Napoléon Didron (1806-1867), Ferdinand-Marie-Nolasque de Guilhermy (1808-1878), Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus (1807-1857), and Félix-Joseph de Verneilh-Puyraseau (1820-1864); all particularly well-informed in archaeology, architecture, and art history.²⁰

<<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/gothicism>>

[Accessed 25 October 2024].

¹⁹ Bressani, p. 333; David Van Zanten, *Designing Paris: The Architecture of Duban, Labrousse, Duc, and Vaudoyer* (MIT Press, 1987), pp. 66-68.

²⁰ Bressani, p. 110; Françoise Bercé, 'Guilhermy, (Roch François) Ferdinand (Marie Nolasque), Baron de,' Grove Art Online, 2003

<<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T035561>> [Accessed 25 October 2024]; 'Didron, Adolphe-Napoléon,' Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, 17 March 2014 <<https://www.inha.fr/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-lart-actifs-en-france-de-la-revolution-a-la-premiere-guerre->

This thesis primarily concerns French Gothicists, however an honourable mention must be given to British architect Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852), who in many respects mirrored Viollet-le-Duc, especially in his capacity as a restorer of historic monuments, and as an advocate for the rejuvenation of the Gothic in the nineteenth century. In his *Contrasts: Or a parallel between the architecture of the 15th and 19th centuries*, published in 1836, Pugin stressed ‘the wonderful superiority’ which the Gothic possessed over Classical architecture and its offshoots, and asserted that ‘it was the faith, the zeal, and above all, the unity of our ancestors, that enabled them to conceive and raise those wonderful fabrics that still remain to excite our wonder and admiration’; evincing his desire for a return to both the architecture and ideals of the Middle Ages.²¹

mondiale/didron-adolphe-napoleon-inha/> [Accessed 25 October 2024]; ‘Verneilh, Félix (de),’ Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, 3 March 2020 <<https://www.inha.fr/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-lart-actifs-en-france-de-la-revolution-a-la-premiere-guerre-mondiale/verneilh-felix-de-inha/>> [Accessed 25 October 2024]; ‘Lassus, Jean-Baptiste,’ Dictionary of Art Historians, n.d. <<https://arthistorians.info/lassusj/>> [Accessed 25 October 2024].

²¹ Augustus Welby Pugin, *Contrasts: Or a parallel between the architecture of the 15th and 19th centuries* (Augustus Welby Pugin, 1836), p. 1, 6.

The Gothicists' beliefs put them in contention with the supporters of Classical, also termed Graeco-Roman or antique architecture, which typically designates that originating from Greece and Rome between the eighth century BCE and the fifth century CE.²² Classical architecture, 'on which the Italian Renaissance and subsequent styles such as the Baroque and the Classical Revival based their development,' is distinguished by its five orders: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite (Fig. 0.15).²³ Each order consists of a fixed style and arrangement of architectural members, governed by the column and the entablature, having 'uniform established proportions, regulated by the office that each part has to perform'.²⁴ Among the more notable instances of Classical architecture are the Acropolis of Athens (Fig. 0.16) and the Pantheon of Rome (Fig. 0.17).

Given that the terms Byzantine, Romanesque, Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical will also feature much in this thesis, it is worth briefly elucidating the styles of architecture they designate. Byzantine architecture, which succeeded the late Roman style in the fourth century CE, 'flourished principally in Greece, but spread widely and lasted throughout the Middle

²² *Illustrated Dictionary*, p. 119.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Joseph Gwilt, *An Encyclopædia of Architecture: Historical, Theoretical, and Practical* (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1836), p. 680.

Ages,' and is generally identified by 'large pendentive-supported domes, round arches and elaborate columns, richness in decorative elements, and colour'; being best exemplified by the Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Istanbul (Fig. 0.18).²⁵ Romanesque architecture, which emerged in early eleventh-century Western Europe from Roman and Byzantine traditions, is 'characterized by massive articulated wall structures, round arches, and powerful vaults'.²⁶ The abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay and the Basilica of Saint-Sernin de Toulouse (Fig. 0.19), both of which Viollet-le-Duc worked on, are good examples of the Romanesque style. Renaissance architecture, which arose in early fifteenth-century Italy along with a renewed interest in 'classical art and learning,' was 'initially characterised by the use of the Classical orders, round arches, and symmetrical composition,' features which may be observed in such edifices as Saint Mark's Library in Venice (Fig. 0.20) and Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican (Fig. 0.21).²⁷ Baroque architecture was first developed in late sixteenth-century Italy as an evolution of the ultimate Renaissance style, being typified by the 'interpenetration of oval spaces, curved surfaces, and conspicuous use of decoration, sculpture, and colour' as seen in the likes of the Karlskirche in

²⁵ *Illustrated Dictionary*, p. 79.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 461-463.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 449-453.

Vienna (Fig. 0.22) and the palace of Versailles (Fig. 0.23).²⁸ Neoclassicism, or the Classical Revival, was a restrained reaction to the Baroque which took place primarily in Europe and the United States in the early nineteenth century, being marked by ‘monumentality, strict use of the orders, and sparing application of ornament’.²⁹ The United States Capitol in Washington D.C. (Fig. 0.24) and the landmarks of the Königsplatz in München (Fig. 0.25) serve as good examples of Neoclassical architecture.

The French bastion of Classicism, the school of thought encompassing the aesthetic ideals and principles of ancient Greek and Roman arts and their various descendants, was the Académie des Beaux-Arts, along with its educational mouthpiece, the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris. The École is ‘one of the oldest and certainly most glorious institutions of its kind that there is in Europe,’ and has long been ‘conceived as the repository of a stable architectural knowledge, not just in France but in much of the Western world’.³⁰ Tracing its origins to the great patron of

²⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 119, 372.

³⁰« L’une des plus anciennes et à coup sûr de la plus glorieuse des institutions de ce genre qui soient en Europe », Eugène Müntz, *Guide de l’École nationale des Beaux-Arts* (Maison Quantin, 1889), p. 1; Jean-Philippe

Italian arts Louis XIV (1643-1715), the Académie followed in the footsteps of Italian Renaissance architects such as Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (1507-1573) and swore by the pontifications of its one-time perpetual secretary, Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849); the ‘champion of Antiquity, who detested the Gothic.’³¹

For much of its history, the École taught Classical, especially Roman architecture, above all else, however in the early eighteen-hundreds, their designs drew increasingly from Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical styles.³² This ever-Italianate shift, which was spearheaded by the likes of Félix Duban (1798-1870), Henri Labrouste (1801-1875), Joseph-Louis Duc (1802-1879), and Léon Vaudoyer (1803-1872), resulted in an architectural Eclecticism which became the hallmark of the Beaux-Arts style.³³ In France, some notable buildings in this style include Labrouste’s Sainte-Geneviève Library (Fig. 0.26), Duban’s Palais des Études at the École des Beaux-Arts de

Garric, ‘The French Beaux-Arts,’ in *The Companion to the History of Architecture*, ed. by Martin Bressani and Christina Contandriopoulos, 3 (John Wiley & Sons, 2016), pp. 1-15 (p. 1).

³¹ « Champion de l’Antiquité, qui détestait le gothique », Poisson and Poisson, p. 19.

³² Garric, p. 9.

³³ Poisson and Poisson, p. 19.

Paris (Fig. 0.27), and Charles Girault's Grand Palais (Fig. 0.28).³⁴ Between the late eighteenth hundreds and early nineteenth hundreds, the Beaux-Arts style branched off into the highly ostentatious Napoleon III or Second Empire style, exemplified by buildings like the Palais Garnier (Figs. 0.29, 0.30, 0.31), and the church of Saint-Augustin de Paris (Fig. 0.32).³⁵

In the 1850s especially, the emergent Classically informed Eclecticism of the Beaux-Arts spilled over into the practice of architectural restoration in France, the majority of the responsibility over which was divided between three Inspectors-General of diocesan monuments; Vaudoyer, Léonce Reynaud (1803-1880), and Viollet-le-Duc, all working under the Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, Hippolyte Fortoul (1811-1856).³⁶ Each Inspector-General was given responsibility over the restoration projects of about a third of France's dioceses, with Viollet-le-Duc being entrusted with the 26 which contained 'the most remarkable cathedrals of France'; a reflection not only of his early successes with the likes of the Sainte-Chapelle and Vézelay, but also because 'Fortoul did not trust him' with new constructions, as Bressani points out, fearing that he would seek to raise

³⁴ Garric, p. 9, 11.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Bressani, p. 198.

Gothic monuments at every opportunity.³⁷ Despite maintaining amicable relations, there was an ‘ideological rift’ between Viollet-le-Duc and the other inspectors-general, who, along with Fortoul and architects Félix Duban and Joseph-Louis Duc, formed a ‘tight circle of artists and writers’.³⁸ They shared in an appreciation of ancient Roman architect Vitruvius (c. 80 BCE-c. 15 CE) and Quatremère de Quincy, and advocated for a minimally invasive, Eclectic approach to historic restoration.³⁹ Holding back ‘from a radical transformation of architecture either in terms of giving themselves up to fantasy, adopting a local style as the archaeological medievalists would do, or accepting exclusively functional and social determinants,’ the Eclecticists, as they will be designated in this thesis, strove to restore historic monuments in a way that would harmonise rather than prioritise between different styles.⁴⁰ They sought to preserve the ‘extrapolated trace of architecture’s development,’ preferring not to purge a monument of additions made after its original construction.⁴¹ They did not see historic architecture as falling into separate and distinct styles, but more so a

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 191; Van Zanten, p. 48.

³⁹ Ibid; Bressani, p. 198.

⁴⁰ Van Zanten, p. 68.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 49.

continuum of evolving form, espousing instead ‘a single system in arcuation itself—one embracing simultaneously the Roman, Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic styles’.⁴² A good example of the Eclectic approach to restoration is Vaudoyer’s work on the Priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (Fig. 0.33) in the late 1840s, where he ‘created a highly refined dialectic’ between the eleventh-century monastery and the Neoclassical addition built in the eighteenth century.⁴³

As shown by Bressani, however, Viollet-le-Duc was known to adopt a much more invasive and interventionist methodology, seeking rather to establish ‘a unified (Gothic) architectural language’ at the expense of additions made to monuments in later centuries.⁴⁴ He asserted in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, that restoring an edifice is ‘not maintaining it, repairing it or remaking it, it is reestablishing it in a complete state which could never have existed at any given moment’.⁴⁵ This definition evokes his belief in the need to place

⁴² Ibid., p. 61; Bressani, p. 206.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 140.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 198.

⁴⁵ « Pas l’entretenir, le réparer ou le refaire, c’est le rétablir dans un état complet qui peut n’avoir jamais existé à un moment donné », Eugène-

oneself in the shoes of the original Gothic architect, and to fulfil their often-unrealised visions, as opposed to simply consolidating the result of what time and circumstances had left to posterity. Another important distinction of Viollet-le-Duc's approach was his conviction that an edifice had to satisfy rational criteria, and that Gothic monuments should also exemplify structurality; he only permitted elements whose form corresponded to a discernible function and demanded that these elements tended toward a unified system.⁴⁶ Contrary to Vaudoyer, Reynaud, and Fortoul, who perceived a gradual evolution from the architecture of Antiquity to the Gothic, Viollet-le-Duc was adamant that there was in fact 'a schism' of styles which could and should be demarcated.⁴⁷ He maintained that in architecture as in all arts, 'unity is the first condition of a good work,' and that the mixture of different styles in a monument detracted from its beauty

Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Restauration,' in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, 9 vols (Bance & Morel, 1860), VIII, pp. 14-34 (p. 14).

⁴⁶ Saint-Paul, p. 45.

⁴⁷ « Un schisme », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 303-308 (p. 305).

and value, not to mention rendering it a perversion of the first architect's conception.⁴⁸

It is worth noting that even Viollet-le-Duc's lifelong friend, fellow Gothicismist, and one-time mentor Merimée, who 'denounced the false ancient and the fashion called "Neoclassical", which is to say composite,' advised the architects of the commission of historic monuments, to 'consolidate by scrupulously conserving the brickwork and the original arrangements, reproduce with caution the destroyed parts, when certain traces exist, and above all leave nothing to invention,' warning also that 'one must restore what has been damaged but not replace what has been lost'.⁴⁹ Merimee's

⁴⁸ « L'unité est la première condition d'une bonne œuvre », Ibid.

⁴⁹ 'Dénonce le faux ancien et la mode dite « néoclassique », c'est-à-dire composite », « consolider en conservant avec scrupule l'appareil et les dispositions primitives, reproduire avec prudence les parties détruites, lorsqu'il en existe des traces certaines, surtout ne rien donner à l'invention », « il faut restaurer ce qui a été endommagé mais non pas remplacer ce qui a été perdu », Xavier Darcos, 'Merimée et le patrimoine national,' Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, 2002
<https://academiesciencesmoralesetpolitiques.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Merimée_patrimoine_national.pdf> [Accessed 25 October 2024]

official recommendation illustrates the degree to which Viollet-le-Duc's approach was unorthodox, which emphasises why it was crucial for him to improve public and professional opinion of it through his writings.

It is important to note that despite not representing the mainstream restoration ideology for most of his career, Viollet-le-Duc's early restoration projects were characterised by more restraint and conservatism. He distinguished himself early on with the restorations of the Sainte-Chapelle, working under the more experienced Lassus, and the abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay, where it was said that 'he pulled himself from the most serious difficulties' with great talent and that 'he was able to rediscover the delicacies of the Gothic style' with science, taste, and 'with what fine criticism'.⁵⁰ These early restoration successes aided in establishing

⁵⁰ Ernest Grille de Beuzelin, 'Commission des monuments historiques institué au ministère de l'Intérieur : Travaux,' *Revue archéologique*, 2.2 (1844), pp. 549-555 (p. 551); « Il s'est tiré des difficultés les plus graves », « il a su retrouver les délicatesses du style gothique », « avec quelle fine critique », Louis-Joseph-Alexandre de Laborde, 'Rapport de l'Académie Royale de l'Architecture sur la provenance et la qualité des pierres employées dans les anciens édifices de Paris et de ses environs, demandé en l'année 1678 par Colbert, surintendant des bâtiments,' *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics*, 10 (1852), pp. 194-211 (p. 203).

his reputation as a capable restorer in the mid-to-late 1840s, allowing him ever greater license with his projects; one which his political connections would only extend.⁵¹ His undeniable technical ability and close connections to the great and good of the nation ‘put him within reach of being awarded important constructions; his relationships among the princes of art as well as the seductions of his drawings’ enabled him to become France’s most prolific restorer of medieval monuments.⁵²

These were not the only aspects, however, which guaranteed Viollet-le-Duc’s success despite denigrating the artistic establishment and being out of step with contemporary architectural theorists and practitioners. His restoration approach fortuitously aligned with the policies of the July Monarchy (1830-1848) and Second Empire (1852-1870), whose administrations sought to ‘preserve ancient monuments for the glorious image they gave of national history.’⁵³ For these regimes, whose restoration

⁵¹ Bressani, p. 192.

⁵² « Le mettait à portée de se faire adjuger d’importantes constructions ; ses relations parmi les princes de l’art comme aussi les séductions de ses dessins », Saint-Paul, p. 11.

⁵³ « Conserver les monuments anciens pour l’image glorieuse qu’ils donnaient de l’histoire nationale » Françoise Bercé, *Viollet-le-Duc* (Éditions du patrimoine, 2013), p. 91

policies betrayed ‘a profound ignorance of medieval art’, it was more important to coat national architecture with ‘a veneer of magnificence’ than to follow the academic consensus.⁵⁴ Bressani maintains that Viollet-le-Duc’s Gothic crusade was ‘perfectly attuned to [Napoléon III’s] goal of “restoring” French society,’ and that the restoration of French cathedrals and the Napoleonic empire ‘had become part of the same program of national unity’. Moreover, Poisson and Poisson emphasise that the Emperor and Empress ‘sought to gather around them those on whom France could pride itself, in all domains; they quickly made Viollet-le-Duc understand that he was among those people’.⁵⁵

Past and present perspectives of Viollet-le-Duc’s nationalism

The ‘long nineteenth century,’ as termed by Eric Hobsbawm, was a period of immense economic, social, and political change.⁵⁶ With capitalist

⁵⁴ « Une ignorance profonde de l’art médiéval », Ibid., p. 33; [Anon.], ‘Foreign Architectural Drawings in the International Exhibition,’ *The Building News and Architectural Review*, 8 (1862), pp. 412-414 (p. 413).

⁵⁵ « Souhaitaient grouper autour d’eux ceux dont la France pouvaient s’enorgueillir, dans tous domaines : ils firent vite comprendre à Viollet-le-Duc qu’il était de ceux-là », Poisson and Poisson, p. 156.

⁵⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (Vintage Books, 1987), p. 56.

and industrialist ideals at its core, it rapidly developed into a world which pitted ‘advanced’ nations against ‘backward’ ones, and in which emperors and empresses held sway over ever-expanding and conflicting colonial dominions.⁵⁷ It was during this period that ‘nationalism took a dramatic leap forward,’ with increasingly liberal and socialist populations eager ‘to identify themselves with “their” nation and to be politically mobilized.’⁵⁸ This movement permeated the arts with particular intensity, driving painters, sculptors, composers, writers, and dramatists alike ‘toward a new sensitivity to the history and specificity of their own ethno-cultural community’.⁵⁹ Even architects began to design ‘gigantic monuments to self-congratulation and imperial propaganda’.⁶⁰ Strangely enough however, only a select number of scholars throughout history have considered Viollet-le-Duc’s engagement with the nationalist phenomenon which was one of the hallmarks of the century in which he lived, and which pervaded much of intellectual life throughout Europe and indeed the world.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 142-3.

⁵⁹ Athena Leoussi, ‘Art, architecture, and nationalism,’ *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*, published online 14 October 2015, pp. 126-136 (p. 126).

⁶⁰ Hobsbawm, p. 222.

The first modern work of literature to intimate a connection between Viollet-le-Duc and French nationalism was architect Pol Abraham's (1891-1966) 'Viollet-le-Duc et le rationalisme médiéval,' published in 1934.

Abraham's primary concern with the text was the deconstruction of Viollet-le-Duc's theories about the rationality of Gothic architecture, however he asserted that throughout his career, the architect 'raised himself against the Académie, priestess of a moribund Graeco-Roman, as an apostle of a national art'.⁶¹ This remark suggests Viollet-le-Duc saw the Gothic as synonymous with national French architecture and sought to champion it in the face of the invading Classical styles. That said, Abraham stressed that for Viollet-le-Duc, the principles of the Gothic drew 'from the laws of the substance and needs of human nature' in general and were not 'applicable to modern necessities' exclusively in France; they served to alleviate the heightened conflict between 'defiant art and invasive industry' which was being felt across the globe in the nineteenth century.⁶² Considering this, it is

⁶¹ « S'est élevé contre l'Académie, prêtresse d'un gréco-romain moribond, en apôtre d'un art national », Pol Abraham, 'Viollet-le-Duc et le rationalisme médiéval,' *Bulletin Monumental*, 93.1 (1934), pp. 69-88 (p. 85).

⁶² « Des lois de la matière et des besoins de la nature humaine », « applicables aux nécessités modernes », « l'art défaillant et l'industrie envahissante », Ibid.

likely that Abraham's use of the term 'national art' was rather a synonym for the Gothic, and that he did not necessarily view Viollet-le-Duc as seeking to advance the French nationalist cause per se.⁶³

A much more explicit position regarding Viollet-le-Duc's nationalism is made in *Viollet-le-Duc : Le Dictionnaire d'architecture : Relevés et observations* by Philippe Boudon and Philippe Deshayes, published in 1979. According to Boudon and Deshayes, some passages of the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, 'and even the choice of the French Gothic period strongly connote the presence of nationalism within Viollet-le-Duc'.⁶⁴ They claim that, as with Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Viollet-le-Duc bore the mark of 'the nationalist stake in architecture and in the recognition of Gothic architecture' specifically.⁶⁵ To support this proposition, they cite Viollet-le-Duc's assertion that the Gothic is 'the natural architecture of the people' of France, and stress that his dictionary 'combats the Italian

⁶³ « Art national », Ibid.

⁶⁴ « Et le choix même de la période gothique française connotent fortement un nationalisme présent chez Viollet-le-Duc », Philippe Boudon and Philippe Deshayes, *Viollet-le-Duc : Le Dictionnaire d'architecture : Relevés et observations* (Pierre Mardaga, 1979), p. 376.

⁶⁵ « L'enjeu nationaliste autour de l'architecture et autour de la reconnaissance de l'architecture gothique », Ibid.

influence of the Renaissance and, through this nationalist revindication,' the imitation of Classical styles.⁶⁶ Here the authors highlight a nationalist motive for Viollet-le-Duc's opposition of the Beaux-Arts, which he saw as the guardian of a decidedly Italian style, one at odds with the nation itself. They also point out how he 'associates Gothic art with the notion of enfranchisement, a notion which is also found in connection with the national role which the Gothic plays'.⁶⁷ As will be touched upon in the body of this thesis, Viollet-le-Duc maintained that the development of Gothic architecture facilitated, and thus came to symbolise the enfranchisement of the French people in the Middle Ages. However, while Boudon and Deshayes identify and contextualise Viollet-le-Duc's engagement with nationalism, they confine it to a single section of a commentary which covers only the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*; with no mention of other works authored at different periods during his life.

⁶⁶ « L'architecture naturelle du peuple », « combat l'influence italienne de la Renaissance et, au travers de cette revendication nationaliste », Ibid.

⁶⁷ « Associe l'art gothique à la notion d'affranchissement, notion qui se retrouve aussi à propos du rôle national que joue le gothique », Ibid., p. 376, p. 349.

A text which looks more comprehensively at Viollet-le-Duc's corpus is Bressani's *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 1814–1879*, published in 2014. Bressani follows the course of Viollet-le-Duc's ideological evolution through his writings and makes numerous salient points regarding his relationship with nationalism. According to Bressani, much of Viollet-le-Duc's career was fuelled by 'a relentless attempt at a historical (and national) "repossession"'.⁶⁸ Unlike the Classical styles espoused by the Beaux-Arts, he viewed the Gothic as a rational practice which adhered uniquely to the 'French national spirit,' and felt that 'the whole country's architectural apparatus must be awakened to its proper Gothic self'.⁶⁹ He traces the beginnings of Viollet-le-Duc's 'nationalist stance' to a letter written by him to Merimée (1803-1870) in 1843 during the restoration of the abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay, in which he noted how historical treasures appear to become significantly more valuable 'when they are tied to our history, to our customs, to the habits of the men who came before us'; the implication being that national arts have a greater worth since they speak to the psyche in a way that foreign arts do not.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Bressani, p. xxiii.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. xxiv, 194, 195.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 114.

In addition to identifying nationalist tendencies, Bressani demonstrates how they penetrated certain of Viollet-le-Duc's written works. His claims regarding the French origins of the Gothic, made in the scholarly journal the *Annales archéologiques* between 1844 and 1847, constituted a 'nationalist argument,' and his publications in the 1850s capitalised on rising nationalist sympathies and policies in imperial France.⁷¹ Of note, the 'Essai sur l'origine et les développements de l'art de bâtir en France depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'au XVIe siècle' and the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, were deeply 'couched within Second Empire politics'.⁷² Bressani stresses the significance of their patriotic undertones, their being published shortly following the declaration of the Second Empire in 1852, and their coinciding with the 'escalation of the Crimean crisis,' which erupted into war in 1853.⁷³ He also emphasises how said writings advocated for an 'authoritarian principle of nationality' and that Viollet-le-Duc's quest to consolidate France's Gothic monuments through a campaign of restoration identified with the 'unifying political ideas of Louis-Napoléon'.⁷⁴ However, Bressani does not explicitly verbalise that Viollet-le-Duc was a

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 129, 194, 208.

⁷² Ibid., p. 226.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 226, 227.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 209, 206.

nationalist, but instead intimates it by demonstrating that he harboured and acted upon nationalist sentiments at certain points in his career.

In *Histoire d'une cathédrale: Viollet-le-Duc's Nationalist Pedagogy*, published in 2018, however, Elizabeth Emery explicitly characterizes Viollet-le-Duc as a nationalist. She argues that 'as a work of propaganda,' the *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale*, published in 1878, 'inspired in French readers a love of their nation while teaching them to appreciate Gothic architecture as an integral component of their shared history'.⁷⁵ Emery differs from prior scholarship in her clear articulation that Viollet-le-Duc was a 'nationalist pedagogue' who engaged in the creation of nationalist and republican propaganda.⁷⁶ She claims that, as an act of patriotism, Viollet-le-Duc devoted himself to imparting historical wisdom upon the children and lower classes of France, 'those citizens most likely to reform the country now that it had become a Republic'.⁷⁷ In fact, she argues that the book teaches the readers more 'about their duties as good patriots than about either the town hall or the cathedral,' citing the greater focus which the text places on social forces and events than on physical

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Emery, 'Histoire d'une cathédrale: Viollet-le-Duc's Nationalist Pedagogy,' *Ritus et Artes*, 9 (2018), pp. 101-129 (p. 129).

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

descriptions.⁷⁸ She further supports this notion by calling attention to the conclusion of the text, in which Viollet-le-Duc made plain his intentions for it to contribute to the ‘visibility and appreciation of what may be the most interesting part of our national history, in that it shows how and at the cost of what sacrifices a country wins and maintains its perpetually contested liberties’.⁷⁹ However, while Emery argues and evinces that Viollet-le-Duc was a nationalist who authored nationalist pedagogy, she confines this argument to the *Histoire d’un hôtel de ville et d’une cathédrale*, and stresses that it was foremost an apology for republicanism, conceived of in response to the Second French Empire’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, which lasted from July of 1870 to January of 1871. In fact, she argues that Viollet-le-Duc only ‘became a nationalist pedagogue in the years following the war,’ suggesting that prior to this time he was neither a nationalist nor a pedagogue.⁸⁰

While building on the analyses, interpretations, and conclusions drawn in previous scholarship, this thesis differs from them significantly in two ways. Firstly, it asserts rather than suggests that Viollet-le-Duc was a nationalist and that his nationalism may be evinced by a broad sample of his

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 127.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

written works as opposed to a select few, published at specific periods in his life. Secondly, it examines how Viollet-le-Duc's nationalism served to justify his unconventional approach to restoration, an argument which has not been made a principal subject of scholarly literature to date. In *Eugène Viollet-le-Duc 1814-1879*, Georges and Olivier Poisson assert that the architect had published the *Description et histoire du Château de Pierrefonds* (1857) and *Description du château de Coucy* (1878) because he 'had learnt to support his architectural projects with publications,' which suggests a similar idea, however they do not specify that nationalism played any role therein.⁸¹ Likewise, Saint-Paul's remark about Viollet-le-Duc using his writings to justify his removal of certain elements from Gothic monuments, as considered earlier in this chapter, was not made in direct connection to his engagement with nationalism.

This thesis replicates the methodology adopted by previous scholars of using Viollet-le-Duc's written works to discern his engagement with nationalism and consists of six chapters which each look at a text, or selection of texts grouped by similarity, and how they bear on the central argument already outlined. These chapters will further be informed by and held up against nineteenth, twentieth, and twentieth-century scholarship

⁸¹ « Avait appris à soutenir ses projets architecturaux par des publications », Poisson and Poisson, p. 183.

which concerns Viollet-le-Duc's nationalism, his restoration theory and practice, and their sociopolitical context. The first chapter deals with the articles Viollet-le-Duc contributed to the *Annales Archeologiques* (1844-1847); the second pertains to the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle* (1854-1868) and the *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l'époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance* (1873-1874); chapter three has to do with the essay 'Antiquités américaines,' published as part of Désiré Charnay's (1828-1915) *Cités et ruines américaines : Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* (1863); the fourth chapter considers the *Entretiens sur l'architecture* (1863-1864); the fifth, the *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871* (1871), the *Histoire d'une maison* (1873), the *Histoire d'une forteresse* (1874), the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* (1875), and the posthumously published *Histoire d'un dessinateur : Comment on apprend à dessiner* (1879); and the final chapter relates to *L'Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir* (1877).

In the interest of keeping within the bounds of an MA thesis, and given that Bressani and Emery have already considered Viollet-le-Duc's nationalist intentions with the 'Essai sur l'origine et les développements de l'art de bâtir en France depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'au XVI^e siècle' (1852), and the *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale* (1878) respectively, the examination of those texts will mostly be omitted from this thesis. Furthermore, the former is an edited version of an earlier article, 'De

la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle' from the *Annales archéologiques* (1844-1847), which will be examined in chapter one. Likewise, this thesis will not consider Viollet-le-Duc's *Habitations modernes* (1877), a résumé of contemporary residential architecture across various regions of France and Europe in general, or his *Description de Notre Dame de Paris* (1856), *Description et histoire du Chateau de Pierrefonds* (1857), *Description du château de Coucy* (1878), *Cité de Carcassonne* (1878), and *Les églises de Paris* (1888); monographs which resemble the historic and technical descriptions of monuments from the dictionaries, but do not bear particularly on the notion of Viollet-le-Duc's being a nationalist or an author of nationalist propaganda.

The importance of exploring this idea derives foremost from the place which Viollet-le-Duc occupies in the Pantheon of France, being as much a household name in the sphere of French architecture as François Mansart (1598-1666), the Marquis de Vauban (Sébastien Le Prestre) (1633-1707), Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923), Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) (1887-1965), and Jean Nouvel. As Paul Léon noted, 'by his powerful personality, by the abundance of his ideas, by the richness of his drawing and of his style, by his encyclopaedic books,' Viollet-le-Duc left an impression upon France that, for better or worse, will not soon be

forgotten.⁸² As will be examined in this thesis, an aspect of this impression which has yet to be fully investigated and understood concerns the dialogue between nationalism and French architectural patrimony found in his books; books which informed and fascinated a generation of architectural students, scholars, and professionals alike, as they still do in the twenty-first century. In overseeing the restoration of over a hundred medieval monuments in France, he was instrumental in shaping modern perceptions of their past, and tightly weaving their identities, along with his name and nationalist ideas, into the fabric of French society. These notions, and Viollet-le-Duc's lasting importance, are best evidenced by the intense public discourse surrounding the soon-to-be-completed restoration project of Notre-Dame de Paris begun in 2019, during which the architect's practices and doctrines have once again been brought to the forefront of architectural academia. As remarked by Saint-Paul, Viollet-le-Duc is a man

⁸² « Par sa personnalité puissante, par l'abondance de ses idées, par la richesse de son dessin et de son style, par ses livres encyclopédiques », Paul Léon, 'Les Principes de la conservation des monuments Historiques : Evolution des doctrines,' *Congrès archéologique de France*, 97.1 (1936), pp. 17-52 (p. 33).

whom it is ‘absolutely necessary to analyse,’ which is as true in 2025 as it was in 1881.⁸³

⁸³ « Absolument indispensable d’analyser », Saint-Paul, p. iii.

Chapter 1: The *Annales archéologiques*

This chapter considers how the majority of the articles which Viollet-le-Duc contributed to the *Annales archéologiques* between 1844 and 1849 served to support the French national claim on the Gothic, to redeem the latter of its disreputation as the fruit of ignorance and barbarism which conjures to the mind ‘only the idea of disorder,’ and to encourage the estimation and revitalization of national architecture in the nineteenth century, especially in France.⁸⁴ At the core of Viollet-le-Duc’s arguments in the *Annales* was the notion that since Gothic architecture arose as a response to French mores, beliefs, climate, and materials, it satisfied the criteria outlined in Quatremère de Quincy’s *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture* (1788-1825) for designating a national architecture. The Gothic was the national architecture of the French because it was the only architecture in France whose form bore a direct relation to the functions necessitated by the French context. The same could not be said, according to Viollet-le-Duc, about the Classical styles which were originally conceived to satisfy the

⁸⁴ « Que l’idée du désordre », Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Ordre,’ in *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture*, 3 vols (Antoinette-Pauline Agasse, 1820), III, pp. 45-48 (p. 45).

needs of the ancient Greeks and Romans.⁸⁵ Transposed into France, these foreign construction systems were separated from the context which informed their development, thus depriving them of their meaning and worth. This juxtaposition of Gothic and Classical architecture in France was a way for Viollet-le-Duc to support his purist approach to restoration since it denigrated the presence of Classical architecture in France and suggested that Classical elements be purged from Gothic monuments or altered to conform to them. He buttressed this position by citing advances made in the relatively new discipline of archaeology, which offered scholars a greater appreciation of the period and locality to which various historic visual cultures belonged, as well as the aesthetic and structural differences between them. He remarked that the circulation of this knowledge was making mixtures of styles in art and architecture seem increasingly unnatural and unpalatable to observers.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' *Annales archéologiques*, 3 (1845), pp. 321-336 (p. 328).

⁸⁶ Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' pp. 303-308 (p. 305).

The nationalist agenda of the Gothicists

The years of Viollet-le-Duc's contributions to the *Annales* fall into what Raoul Girardet termed the first, or revolutionary, period of French nationalism, lasting from 1815 to 1871, and manifesting itself especially under the Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830) and the July Monarchy (1830-1848).⁸⁷ At the core of this nascent French nationalism was the 'fidelity to the memories of the revolutionary period combined with those of the Napoleonic epic' and the affirmation of the people's right to self-determination.⁸⁸ The spirit of the times also gave rise to the Liberal Catholic movement which, according to Arnaud de Lassus, traced its origins to the revolution of the 1790s, and made significant progress in the early and mid-eighteen-hundreds.⁸⁹ Extolling 'liberty as a primary value' in social, political, and religious life, the Liberal Catholics 'considered architecture the most social art, and therefore gave it the highest priority'.⁹⁰ Given that they also

⁸⁷ Raoul Girardet, 'Pour une Introduction à l'Histoire du Nationalisme Français,' *Revue française de science politique*, 8.3 (1958), pp. 505-528 (p. 510).

⁸⁸ « Fidélité aux souvenirs de la période révolutionnaire confondus avec ceux de l'épopée napoléonienne », Ibid.

⁸⁹ Arnaud de Lassus, *Connaissance élémentaire du Libéralisme catholique* (Action Familiale & Scolaire, 1988), pp. 6-8.

⁹⁰ « La liberté comme valeur première », Ibid., p. 2; Bressani, p. 129.

hoped to bring back, ‘with the intelligence of Gothic art, the taste and sense of the Middle Ages,’ there was a natural affinity between the Liberal Catholics and the Gothicists, who wished to reconcile medieval French architecture with modern France.⁹¹ It was within this context which Viollet-le-Duc began his career as a writer of architectural history and theory.

The *Annales archéologiques* was an academic journal directed by Adolphe Napoléon Didron (1806–1867), French art historian and archaeologist specialising in early and medieval Christian works. The journal, which treated the Gothic ‘with a particular predilection,’ reflected a growing interest in the science of archaeology in addition to the increasing prevalence of historic monumental restorations in France, and indeed much of Europe at the time.⁹² Bressani points out that the scholars Didron gathered around him to produce the *Annales* were Gothic revivalists and ‘militant activists’ aligned with the ideology of the contemporary Liberal

⁹¹ « Avec l’intelligence de l’art gothique, le goût et le sens du moyen âge », Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Les Catholiques libéraux : L’Église et le libéralisme de 1830 à nos jours*, (Plon & Nourrit, 1885), p. 70.

⁹² « Avec une prédilection particulière », [Anon.], ‘Introduction,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 1 (1844), p. iii; Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle,’ pp. 334-347 (pp. 334-335).

Catholics, or Neo-Catholics, who saw the Gothic as being uniquely tied to Christianity and the French nation.⁹³ For Viollet-le-Duc, Gothic architecture, Christianity, and the French nation, could not be separated, and had necessarily played crucial roles in the development of one another in the past, as they still did in the nineteenth century.⁹⁴

While Bressani asserts that Viollet-le-Duc's contributions to the journal were the first examples of French religious nationalism, according to which French nationality could be predicated upon membership to its religious community, I would stress also that the *Annales archéologiques* were conceived of as an organ of nationalist thought as a whole.⁹⁵ Didron made no overt references to nationalism in the introduction of the first volume, however, certain of its articles suggest that Viollet-le-Duc was not alone in

⁹³ Bressani, p. 129

⁹⁴ Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (pp. 328-329).

⁹⁵ Ibid., (p. 129); "L'Essor des nationalismes religieux" – 3 questions à Olivier Da Lage,' Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, 10 October 2018 <<https://www.iris-france.org/120546-lessor-des-nationalismes-religieux-3-questions-a-olivier-da-lage/>> [Accessed 26 October 2024].

advocating for nationalist ideas, and in using them to oppose the use of Classical styles in France as encouraged by the Beaux-Arts. Of note, the articles of Lassus, with whom Viollet-le-Duc collaborated on the restoration of the Sainte-Chapelle and Notre-Dame de Paris among other projects, show strong indications of a connection between Gothicism and French nationalism. Although Viollet-le-Duc's writings are the primary focus of this thesis, his articles in the *Annales* cannot be divorced from the publishing context; it was a collaborative effort, and its articles complimented and informed one another.⁹⁶ In an article for the *Annales* entitled 'De l'art et de l'archéologie,' Lassus stated that 'our adversaries are those who claim, in the name of *rationalism*, that in architecture all progress consists in reversing back to the times of the Greeks and the Romans'.⁹⁷ Here he was referring to the Beaux-Arts and other proponents of neoclassicism, who perceived in antique architecture a simultaneously natural and scientific harmony of proportion which embodied the ideas of rationalist philosopher René

⁹⁶ Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus, 'De l'art et de l'archéologie,' *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 197-204 (p. 200).

⁹⁷ « Nos adversaires sont ceux qui prétendent, au nom du *rationalisme*, qu'en architecture tout le progrès consiste à reculer jusqu'au temps des Grecs et des Romains », *Ibid.*, (p. 197).

Descartes'.⁹⁸ Additionally, Lassus verbalized the position of the *Annales*' contributors regarding national architecture, which he equated with the Gothic: 'that which we wish to prove, is that we have a national architecture, entirely born on our soil, admirably appropriated to our materials and to our climate'.⁹⁹ Another contributor, Félix-Joseph de Verneilh-Puyraseau, wrote an article series called 'Origine française de l'architecture ogivale' which asserted the French national claim upon Gothic architecture, and characterized German, Italian, and English variants as mere imitations or adaptations.¹⁰⁰ This demonstrates how the Gothicists believed that the Gothic was the native and national architecture of France, making it better suited for use therein than Classical styles, and intended to disseminate this idea through the journal. This notion is further underlined by Lassus'

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Broadbent, *Emerging Concepts in Urban Space Design* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990), pp. 81-84.

⁹⁹ « Ce que nous voulons prouver, c'est que nous avons une architecture nationale, entièrement née sur notre sol, admirablement appropriée à nos matériaux et à notre climat », Lassus, (p. 197).

¹⁰⁰ Félix de Verneilh-Puyraseau, 'Origine française de l'architecture ogivale,' *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 133-142; Félix de Verneilh-Puyraseau, 'Origine française de l'architecture ogivale (suite et fin),' *Annales archéologiques*, 3 (1845), pp. 156-165.

statement that the Gothic demonstrated ‘evident, incontestable progress on antique architecture,’ which he claimed was ‘an art whose imitation is impracticable’ among the French in the nineteenth century.¹⁰¹ He argued that the artistic reform preached by the Gothicists of the *Annales* ‘should have as its principal goal to make disappear, to shamefully chase away the antique element which has introduced itself among us to substitute our national art.’¹⁰² Even if the concept of the equivalence between Gothic and national architecture was not shared outside the Gothicist circle, this last statement frames the nationalist mission of the *Annales* in a way that makes it impossible to ignore, and it cements the notion that Viollet-le-Duc’s contributions were conceived in a nationalist context. Lassus even explained that while other contributors were to convince readers of the nationality, rationality, and general superiority of the Gothic in terms of proportion and decoration, Viollet-le-Duc’s articles would ‘alleviate all doubts’ regarding Gothic construction in his ‘De la construction des edifices religieux’.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ « Progrès évident, incontestable, sur l’architecture antique », « un art dont l’imitation est impraticable », Lassus, (p. 197).

¹⁰² « Devra avoir pour but principal de faire disparaître, de chasser honteusement l’élément antique qui s’est introduit chez nous pour substituer à notre art national », Ibid., (p. 200).

¹⁰³ « Lèveront tous les doutes », Ibid., (p. 201).

Something else which Lassus' remarks highlight, especially those concerning the secular artistic 'heritage of [the nation's] fathers,' is that despite the *Annales*' ostensibly religious point of view and readership, its contributors did not limit themselves to championing religious nationalism alone.¹⁰⁴ As evidenced by his articles in the *Annales*, Viollet-le-Duc advocated for what is generally termed romantic, organic, or identity nationalism, an idea originated by German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who maintained that nations were distinguished by geographical and climatic boundaries, 'but more particularly by languages, inclinations, and characters'.¹⁰⁵ Herder's conceptualization of romantic nationalism has generally been retained in twenty-first-century academia. Joep Leerssen defines it as 'the celebration of the nation (defined in its language, history, and cultural character) as an inspiring ideal for artistic expression; and the instrumentalization of that expression in political consciousness-raising'.¹⁰⁶ It is important to note that romantic nationalism is a broad concept which is often either viewed through the lens of civic nationalism,

¹⁰⁴ « L'héritage de nos pères », Ibid., (p. 200).

¹⁰⁵ Carlton Hayes, 'Contributions of Herder to the Doctrine of Nationalism,' *The American Historical Review*, 32.4 (1927), pp. 719-736 (p. 722).

¹⁰⁶ Joep Leerssen, 'Notes toward a Definition of Romantic Nationalism,' *Romantik: Journal for the study of Romanticisms*, 2.1 (2013), pp. 9-35 (p. 28).

which predicates nationality on political affiliation and place of birth or residence, or ethnic nationalism, according to which it is grounded on ‘shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry’.¹⁰⁷ Despite the strongly civic origins of French nationalism, Viollet-le-Duc adopted an ethnic conception of romantic nationalism, as will become evident in this chapter, and indeed this thesis.

As highlighted by Bressani, the contents and perspective featured in the *Annales* suggest a primarily Gothicism and Neo Catholic or Liberal Catholic readership, with Didron himself declaring the journal as ‘the voice of the archaeological apostolate and as an instrument of the Christian Renaissance in art, which preoccupies all minds in this moment’.¹⁰⁸ That said, the *Annales* also garnered the attention of those who opposed the revival of Gothic arts, favouring the antique Greek and Roman traditions instead. A good example of this is that the incumbent perpetual secretary of

¹⁰⁷ Jerry Muller, ‘Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism,’ *Foreign Affairs*, 87.2 (2008), pp. 18-35 (p. 20).

¹⁰⁸ Bressani, p. 129; « L’organe de l’apostolat archéologique et comme un instrument de la Renaissance chrétienne dans l’art, qui préoccupe en ce moment tous les esprits », [Anon.], ‘Introduction,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 1 (1844), p. vii.

the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Désiré Raoul-Rochette (1790-1854), wrote a manifesto, first published in 1846 in the *Revue archéologique*, responding to certain of Viollet-le-Duc's articles in the *Annales*.¹⁰⁹ The engagement of such a prominent figure in the Beaux-Arts community with the *Annales* demonstrates that it was not just the supporters of Gothic art and architecture who were interested in reading what the Gothicists had to say. The likes of Viollet-le-Duc, Didron, and Lassus were addressing the better part of the French artistic community, regardless of the school of thought to which readers may have belonged.

Notwithstanding a large number of drawings, Viollet-le-Duc contributed thirteen articles to the *Annales* individually, as well as one co-written with Auguste Virebent (1792-1857), one with de Guilhermy, and another with Léon Gaucherel (1816-1886). This chapter considers ten of the said sixteen articles, published between 1844 and 1849, all of which bear on the origins and development of Gothic architecture, and its relationship

¹⁰⁹ Désiré Raoul-Rochette, 'Considérations sur la question de savoir s'il est convenable au XIX^e siècle de bâtir des églises en style gothique,' *Revue archéologique*, 3 (1846), pp. 179–185.

with the French nation.¹¹⁰ The unfinished series comprising eight sequential articles, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France’ was Viollet-le-Duc’s first foray into scholarly writing and was conceived of as a historical survey of French ecclesiastical construction, capitalizing on recent developments made in the science of archaeology in France. ‘Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle’ was written to address concerns raised by Raoul-Rochette (1790-1854); who questioned ‘where is the reason, where is the necessity, in the conditions of current society,’ for copying a style of architecture which belonged to and suited the needs of a bygone age?¹¹¹ Raoul-Rochette’s questions were put forth in ‘Considérations sur la question de savoir s’il est convenable, au XIX^e siècle, de bâtir des églises en style gothique,’ which itself was a response to ‘De la construction des édifices

¹¹⁰ Since the articles, ‘La Cité de Carcassonne’ (1844), ‘Mutilation des Jacobins de Toulouse’ (1847), ‘Les Jacobins de Toulouse’ (1847), ‘Piscines du XIII^e siècle’ (1846), ‘Grand encensoir de Théophile’ (1848), and ‘Pavements du moyen âge’ (1849) do not bear on nationalism specifically, are generally shorter, and of a more journalistic or technical nature, their treatment has been omitted from this thesis.

¹¹¹ « Où en est la raison, où en est la nécessité, dans les conditions de la société actuelle », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 4 (1846), pp. 325-353 (p. 331).

religieux en France'.¹¹² 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national' was intended to elucidate the evolution of national architecture in France. In the latter, Viollet-le-Duc remarked how he and the other contributors to the *Annales* were seeking to make Gothic monuments 'appreciated and respected like they deserve'.¹¹³ This statement, which echoes those made by Lassus, demonstrates how the *Annales* were not intended solely to inform the readers about Gothic architecture, but also to win them over to the Gothicists' side.

The equivalence of Gothic and French national architecture

In the articles he contributed to the *Annales*, Viollet-le-Duc offered several nationalistic justifications for returning Gothic edifices to their original state. Among the more significant of these dealt with the notion that Gothic architecture could and should be synonymous with French national architecture. He termed the Gothic 'the only truly national architecture' of

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ « Apprécier et respecter comme ils le méritent », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (p. 272).

France, having been deeply and uniquely connected to the French people for centuries.¹¹⁴ He described Gothic architecture as being:

Born to us, created by us, which all of Europe disputes of us and envies us, which has analogues nowhere, which belongs exclusively to a corner of our territory, of which the examples have remained standing for six hundred years (no matter what was done to destroy them) and which will last even longer than the dull reflections of Antiquity which we are today being made to take for our national architecture.¹¹⁵

The last sentence in this quotation suggests that mainstream French artistic academia, the Beaux-Arts, perpetuated the idea that Classical

¹¹⁴ « La seule architecture vraiment nationale », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle,' (p. 338).

¹¹⁵ « Née chez nous, créée par nous, que toute l'Europe nous dispute et nous envie, qui n'a d'analogues nulle part, qui appartient exclusivement à un coin de notre territoire, dont les exemples sont restés six cents ans debout (quoi qu'un ait fait pour les détruire) et qui dureront encore plus longtemps que les ternes reflets de l'Antiquité qu'on voudrait aujourd'hui nous faire prendre pour notre architecture nationale », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (pp. 306-307).

architectural styles were emblematic of the nation. As will be seen shortly, there is evidence to suggest that this was contrary to fact, and that the Beaux-Arts opposed the notion that France possessed any national architecture whatsoever. On the contrary, a popular belief at the time was that the Gothic had resulted from the influence of the Arab conquests and the Crusades, which took place around the turn of the first millennium CE.¹¹⁶ Notwithstanding Byzantine and Romanesque architecture, Quatremère de Quincy asserted that ‘Moresque or Saracen architecture had been the model and the guide of *Gothic* architects’.¹¹⁷ Contemporary archaeologist and art historian Arcisse de Caumont (1801-1873) cast serious doubts regarding this notion in his 1823 *Essai sur l'architecture religieuse du*

¹¹⁶ Arcisse de Caumont, *Essai sur l'architecture religieuse du Moyen Age, principalement en Normandie* (Chalopin Fils, 1825), pp. 49-53.

¹¹⁷ « L’architecture mauresque ou sarrasine avait été le modèle et le guide des architectes *gothiques* », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Arabe (Architecture),’ I, pp. 72-73 (p. 73); Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ II, pp. 455-474 (p. 464); Bressani, p. 232. In terms of architecture, Saracen, and Moresque (or Moorish) respectively denote the styles originating from the Middle East and greater Islamic world between the seventh to sixteenth centuries, and the Al-Andalus and Maghreb from the eighth century onwards. *Illustrated Dictionary*, p. 333, 367, 360.

Moyen Age, principalement en Normandie, however Viollet-le-Duc's determination to dispel it suggests that many nineteenth-century French academics still gave it credence in the 1840s when his articles were published in the *Annales*.¹¹⁸

In a bid to discount the Moorish and Saracen influences perceived by many of his peers, Viollet-le-Duc cited two observations. Firstly, that Islamic religious monuments typically feature thick fulcrums resulting in small, dark voids, while Gothic churches and cathedrals have slender interior and exterior fulcrums (flying buttresses), allowing for larger, brighter voids.¹¹⁹ Secondly, he stated that Islamic scriptures forbade the representation of natural forms in the arts, permitting only the use of 'geometric combinations,' which is not the case with the Gothic.¹²⁰ Regarding Viollet-le-Duc's first observation, in support of which he cited no examples, one need but consider Julia Pardoe's *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* from 1838 (Fig. 1.1),

¹¹⁸ De Caumont, p. 50.

¹¹⁹ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II,' *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 78-85 (p. 79). The term fulcrum refers to supporting structures in architecture such as columns, piers, beams, and walls.

¹²⁰ « Combinaisons géométriques », Ibid., pp. 78-85 (p. 79).

Pascal-Xavier Coste's *Architecture arabe, ou Monuments du Kaire, mesurés et dessinés, de 1818 à 1826* from 1839 (Fig. 1.2), or Ermete Pierotti's *Jerusalem Explored, being a description of the ancient and modern city* from 1864 (Fig. 1.3) to see that Islamic architecture is not typified by massive fulcrums and shadowy interiors by and large, and that it was not portrayed as such in nineteenth-century scholarship. As for Viollet-le-Duc's second point, it is true that Islamic rules of aniconism generally prohibit 'human and animal representation' in religious art and architecture, however, they do not strictly forbid the representation of flora or other natural subjects, as he claimed.¹²¹ Of note, Quatremère de Quincy's *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture* published between 1788 and 1825, which Viollet-le-Duc was known to have read, specified how 'instead of figures of men and animals of whose imitation their religion had forbidden,' Islamic artists 'devoted themselves to painting in their buildings, flowers and scrolls of imaginary foliage' called arabesques.¹²² This suggests that Viollet-le-Duc was aware of

¹²¹ *Illustrated Dictionary*, p. 306.

¹²² « Au défaut de figures d'hommes, et d'animaux dont leur religion avait proscrit l'imitation », « s'adonnèrent à peindre dans leurs bâtiments, des fleurs et des rinceaux de feuillages imaginaires », Quatremère de Quincy, 'Arabesques ou Moresques,' I, pp. 73-82 (p. 73); Jean Nayrolles, 'La theorie

the Muslim perspective on idolatry yet misrepresented it to cast doubts over the connection between Islamic art and the Gothic perpetuated by contemporary mainstream scholars, which posed a threat to the Gothicists' French claim over national architecture. To give credit to Viollet-le-Duc, his scepticism regarding the Islamic influence upon the Gothic was not entirely misplaced. While some in the twenty-first century still support the oriental argument, the scholarly consensus remains that it lacks sufficient evidence, and that not much more can be said with certainty regarding the origins of the Gothic, than that it first took root in northern France and was a direct successor of the Romanesque style; itself a descendant of Roman architecture.¹²³ Be that as it may, Viollet-le-Duc's justifications were contrary

des proportions de Quatremère de Quincy a Viollet-le-Duc,' in *Essais et mélanges en l'honneur de Bruno Foucart*, ed. By Barthélémy Jobert, 2 vols (Norma, 2008), II, pp. 355-377 (p. 372).

¹²³ David Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture* (Watson-Guptill, 2005), p. 149; Jacques Thibaut, *Les Cathédrales gothiques en Picardie* (Centre régional de documentation pédagogique d'Amiens, 1987); Jean Nayrolles, (p. 358); William Whyte, 'Stealing from the Saracens: How Islamic architecture shaped Europe, by Diana Darke,' *Church Times*, 5 February 2021

to established nineteenth-century knowledge, as they are to modern understanding, which only emphasizes the idea that his articles in the *Annales* constituted works of nationalist propaganda; designed to frame the Gothic as the exclusive cultural property of the French, with a view to dethroning the Classical styles of architecture which had become ubiquitous in France since the Renaissance.

While the equivalence between Gothic and French national architecture had been proposed as far back as 1280 and maintained by Gothicists since 1836, most nineteenth-century French scholars believed that the Gothic belonged no more to France than any other nation in which its monuments could be found.¹²⁴ In the *Encyclopédie méthodique* :

<<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/5-february/books-arts/book-reviews/stealing-from-the-saracens-how-islamic-architecture-shaped-europe-by-diana-darke>> [Accessed 27 October 2024].

¹²⁴ Emanuele Gallotta, 'The Gothic or *Opus Francigenum*: An Architecture from France Without Borders,' Digital Encyclopaedia of European History, 19 May 2021 <<https://ehne.fr/en/node/14123>> [Accessed 27 October 2024].

In 1280, Burkhard von Hall, the dean and chronicler of the Gothic Collegiate church of Saint Peter in Bad Wimpfen, Germany, described it as 'Opus Francigenum' (French work); Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Eugène Renduel, 1836), p. 10.

Architecture, ‘a remarkable and influential summation of Classical architectural knowledge,’ Quatremère de Quincy stressed that one could attribute ‘to *Gothic* architecture no systematic origin demonstrated by its monuments, no local origin proven by history, no chronological origin attested by facts.’¹²⁵ Likewise, in Arcisse de Caumont’s *Essai sur l’architecture religieuse du Moyen Age, principalement en Normandie* from 1823, he argued that despite France being the undisputable cradle of the Gothic, it was impossible to say that the French alone had created it entirely, or that they possessed more of a claim to it than the English or the Germans.¹²⁶ De Caumont’s position aligns with the consensus supported by twenty-first-century historians such as David Watkin, who argued that the Gothic originated in France, but dismissed the ‘nationalistic claims’ made by France, England, and Germany around 1800, favouring a more international development narrative.¹²⁷

That said, why do scholars agree that the Gothic was born in France, as Viollet-le-Duc himself argued, but deny the French national claim? As

¹²⁵ Bressani, p. 232; « À l’architecture *gothique* aucune origine systématique démontrée par ses monuments, aucune origine chronologique attestée par les faits », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ (p. 462).

¹²⁶ De Caumont, p. 50.

¹²⁷ Watkin, p. 149.

highlighted in 2021 by historian of medieval architecture Emmanuelle Gallotta in *The Gothic or Opus Francigenum: An Architecture from France Without Borders*, the Gothic first crystalized in northern France as a ‘successfully developed’ construction system, yet its precursory elements existed all throughout the Romanesque monuments of Paleochristian Europe, not just in France.¹²⁸ The exportation of novel ideas from France by ecclesiastical communities and monastic orders fertilized and galvanized these elements, facilitating the coalescence of ‘a common cultural identity’ which stretched from England to Cyprus and from Portugal to Hungary.¹²⁹ Gallotta’s article demonstrates how for any one of the nations involved in this centuries-long international collaboration to claim it as the fruit of their labours alone would be reductive at best, and untrue at worst. Thus, for Viollet-le-Duc, during whose career the French claim to the Gothic was contested in such a manner, it was necessary to prove that it was French in and of itself, and not simply non-Islamic, which still left space for the claims of other European nations. To do so, this thesis posits that Viollet-le-Duc made use of Quatremère de Quincy’s *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture*. In the text, the latter asserted that the Gothic did not belong to the French, and that in order to designate any architecture as national, it would first be necessary to

¹²⁸ Gallotta.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

identify ‘a system which contains a characteristic form in the principal members of which the buildings are composed, a mode of construction given and prescribed by local need, and a taste for decoration which depends on the special genius, mores and institutions of a people’.¹³⁰ Essentially, Quatremère de Quincy outlined that national claims upon architecture necessitated a direct causational relationship between the functions of a nation and the form of its construction system. Thus, if Viollet-le-Duc could prove that such a relationship existed between the French and the Gothic, he could definitively designate the latter as the French national architecture, all within the bounds of mainstream artistic theory.

To that end, he claimed that there was a deep-seated affinity between the Gothic and the French, and that those of the nineteenth century were the same, corporeally and spiritually speaking, as those of the Middle-Ages; stressing that they understood much better ‘their old architecture, framing

¹³⁰ « Un système qui renferme une forme caractéristique dans les membres principaux dont se composent les édifices, un mode de construction donné et prescrit par le besoin local, un goût d’orner qui dépende du génie spécial, des mœurs et des institutions d’un peuple », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ (p. 458).

the national spirit,' than any subsequent style in France.¹³¹ He stated that Gothic monuments 'have a signification for the people, and speak to their imagination'.¹³² He added that in defiance of 'the discourse of schools and the inoculation of the Antiquity' among the French, the better part of the nation 'has conserved a profound respect for these old edifices; it loves them, it understands them'.¹³³ According to him, the developments of the Renaissance, the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), the enlightenment, and the revolution of the 1790s 'have not modified our old Gaulish character, happily; we have not become more Greek or more Roman than we were in

¹³¹ « Leur vieille architecture, encadrant l'esprit national », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (p. 336).

¹³² « Ont une signification pour le peuple, et parlent à leur imagination », Ibid., (p. 329).

¹³³ « Le discours des écoles et l'inoculation de l'Antiquité », « a conservé un respect profond pour ses vieux édifices ; elle les aime, elle les comprend », Ibid.

the fourteenth century'.¹³⁴ Here can be seen an early indication of Viollet-le-Duc's view that race played a pivotal role in the origin and development of national architecture, an idea which became increasingly prevalent in his later writings. As noted by Bressani, this sort of connection between peoples and architecture was first postulated by Quatremère de Quincy, who claimed that prehistoric hunter, shepherd, and agrarian lifestyles had given rise to cave, tent, and cabin dwellings respectively; from which Egyptian, Chinese, and Greek architecture originated in turn.¹³⁵ Bressani shows how this idea was adopted and applied to a racial context in nineteenth-century France and Britain, and that a similar notion was conceived of independently in Germany at the same time, however none of the scholars who considered the relationship between race and architecture characterized it as deterministic in the way that Viollet-le-Duc did.¹³⁶ That

¹³⁴ « N'ont pas modifié notre vieux caractère gaulois, heureusement ; nous ne sommes pas devenus plus grecs ni plus romains que nous ne l'étions au quatorzième siècle », Ibid.

¹³⁵ Bressani, pp. 352-353.

¹³⁶ Bressani, pp. 252-253. Bressani cites the *Historical Essay on Architecture* (1835) by designer Thomas Hope (1769-1831), the *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture* (1855) by architect James Fergusson (1808-1886), the *Histoire*

said, he did not explore the notion in depth in the *Annales*, but rather made it a more substantial element of later works, especially ‘Antiquités américaines’ and *L’Histoire de l’habitation humaine*, as this thesis will consider in subsequent chapters.

Approaching Quatremère de Quincy’s criteria for national architecture more directly, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that the peculiarities of the Gothic arose from a need to cater to the French climate; citing that its architects were ever aware ‘that it rains, that it snows, and that it freezes in France’.¹³⁷ Thus they made ‘rooves pointed enough to prevent snow from sojourning there’ and devised a system which conveyed rainwater from gutters, through gargoyles and down channels built into the declines of flying buttresses, with a view to displacing the water ‘which slides ceaselessly

générale de l’architecture (1860-1862) by Daniel Ramée (1806-1887), *Alt nordisches Lebe* (1856) by medievalist Karl Weinhold (1823-1901), and *Der Stil den technischen und tektonische Künsten* (1860) by architect Gottfried Semper (1803-1879).

¹³⁷ « Qu’il pleut, qu’il neige, et qu’il gèle en France », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 336-349 (p. 347).

along the walls and impregnates their foundations' (Fig. 1.4).¹³⁸ Likewise, he claimed that Gothic stringcourses, drip moulds, and fillets were expressly designed to 'protect the walls against the destructive efforts of humidity' (Fig. 1.5).¹³⁹ This way, he framed the motifs of Gothic structure and ornament as the result of medieval French architects adapting to local challenges in construction, as a testament to a rational mindset which 'extended down to the smallest details in these edifices, from the roof to the

¹³⁸ « Des toits assez aigus pour empêcher la neige d'y séjourner », « qui glisse sans cesse le long de les murs et qui imprègne leurs fondations », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (p. 329); Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III,' (p. 345).

¹³⁹ « protéger les murs contre les efforts destructeurs de l'humidité », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (p. 322).

last moulding'.¹⁴⁰ He added that 'they followed in this one of the most beautiful principles of good antique architecture,' implying that the idiosyncrasies of Greek and Roman construction were likewise conceived of to correspond to the climate of their original environment, which is to say, rational.¹⁴¹ Here Viollet-le-Duc foreshadowed the notion that architectural rationality was in fact a universal principle, yet he made this point more concretely in subsequent publications, as will be considered later.

Contrary to what many among the Beaux-Arts believed, the rationality of antique architecture was not founded on aesthetics alone, according to Viollet-le-Duc, but predicated on this relationship between form and function; flat profiled cornices are perfectly suited to the dry Mediterranean climate, but highly impractical in France.¹⁴² The argument regarding the

¹⁴⁰ « Étendit jusque dans les moindres détails de ses édifices, depuis le toit jusqu'à la dernière moulure », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III,' (p. 347).

¹⁴¹ « Ils suivaient en cela l'un des plus beaux principes de la bonne architecture antique », Ibid., (p. 345).

¹⁴² Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (p. 322).

suitability of the Gothic to the French climate has been made before and after Viollet-le-Duc, however it has usually been applied to the climate of north-west Europe in general, which France shares with the British Isles, the Low Countries, and parts of Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Spain.¹⁴³ Despite Viollet-le-Duc's intimation, France is not the only country in Europe where it rains, snows, and freezes, and this argument could easily have been used by another nation to assert their claim upon the Gothic.

He did not rest his argument on climatic correspondence alone however, seeking also to show that the Gothic was in harmony with the customs, beliefs, and practical needs of the French. He claimed that they had always been much more 'at ease' in Gothic monuments, having never understood or related to 'antique pastiches' or 'copies of the antique,' which they viewed as little more than 'cold masses of stone'.¹⁴⁴ Gothic churches and

¹⁴³ Quatremère de Quincy, 'Gothique (Architecture),' (p. 458); Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student, Craftsman, and Amateur*, 5th edn (Batsford & Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), pp. 267-277.

¹⁴⁴ « À l'aise », « pastiches antiques », « copies de l'antique », « froides masses de pierre », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (pp. 329, 336).

cathedrals were designed to comfortably house 'entire populations, offering large empty spaces for the circulation of crowds, allowing the penetration of air and light,' all of which being necessary for conducting the liturgy.¹⁴⁵ For Viollet-le-Duc, this suitability was no coincidence. The Gothic was a system which twelfth and thirteenth-century French architects were 'forced to adopt in order to satisfy the needs of the Christian religion'; it was nothing if not rational, suited to nothing if not the purposes of its congregations.¹⁴⁶ Whereas the style and form of neoclassical monuments emulated ancient Greek and Roman temples, originally conceived for pagan worship, the Gothic had its own Christian style and form 'consecrated by a long usage' and by the French 'national genius'.¹⁴⁷ In addition to highlighting the

¹⁴⁵ « Des populations entières, offrant de grands espaces vides pour la circulation de la foule, laissant pénétrer l'air et la lumière », Ibid., (p. 329).

¹⁴⁶ « Forcés d'adopter pour satisfaire aux besoins du culte chrétien », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II (suite et fin),' *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 143-150 (p. 150).

¹⁴⁷ « Consacrées par un long usage », « génie national », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),' (p. 328).

compatibility of Gothic monuments with Christian worship, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that a unique harmony existed between the French and Christianity itself.¹⁴⁸ He quoted philosopher Joseph de Maistre's (1753-1821) *Du Pape* (1819) in claiming that this religion 'penetrated the French early on, with an ease that could only be the result of a particular affinity,' and that the French 'had the unique honour, and of which they were not nearly proud enough,' of raising the Papacy to its august state.¹⁴⁹ Here Viollet-le-Duc addressed Quatremère de Quincy's criteria for national architecture with a syllogistic argument; since the Gothic caters uniquely to the needs of Christian worship, and since the French possess a special affinity with Christianity, then the Gothic must correspond to the French nation. It is difficult to deny that in his account of the history of religious Gothic construction, Viollet-le-Duc sought to prove that it was, in accordance with Quatremère de Quincy's criteria, 'formed in a given country, by certain natural causes dependent on the instincts of habitation of that country, of the needs of its climate, of the

¹⁴⁸ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre IV,' *Annales archéologiques*, 4 (1846), p. 266-283 (p. 266).

¹⁴⁹ « Pénétra de bonne heure les Français, avec une facilité qui ne pouvait être que le résultat d'une affinité particulière », « eurent l'honneur unique, et dont ils n'ont pas été à beaucoup près assez orgueilleux », Ibid.

mores and the institutions which were established there,' and thereby, the French national architecture.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ « Formée dans un pays donné, de certaines causes naturelles dépendantes de l'instinct des habitants de ce pays, des besoins de son climat, des mœurs et des institutions qui y étaient établis », Quatremère de Quincy, 'Gothique (Architecture)', (p. 458).

The rationality of Gothic architecture

As important as it was for Viollet-le-Duc and the other contributors of the *Annales* to show how the Gothic was the national architecture of France, however, this was merely a part of their nationalist agenda. Another consisted in addressing and invalidating unfavourable contemporary perceptions of the Gothic and replacing them with an impression of its beauty and rationality above all else. According to Viollet-le-Duc's contemporary, Arcisse de Caumont, Gothic monuments had been 'regarded with disdain' for centuries in France.¹⁵¹ Between the Renaissance and the early eighteen-hundreds, only buildings of Roman origin had 'excited the interest' of the nation.¹⁵² Viollet-le-Duc himself remarked upon the long-held notion in France that antique architecture was 'the beautiful one, the perfect one, the sage one, the great one, the sublime one,' whereas the Gothic was 'barbarism, obscurity, ignorance, a sort of nauseating amalgam, of an unhealthy chemical operation'.¹⁵³ Robert Bartlett points out in *Medieval*

¹⁵¹ « Regardés avec dédain », De Caumont, p. 3.

¹⁵² « Exciter l'intérêt », Ibid.

¹⁵³ « Le beau, le parfait, le sage, le grand, le sublime », « la barbarie, l'obscurité, l'ignorance, sorte d'amalgame nauséabond, d'opération chimique malsaine », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (p. 305).

Panorama (2001) that this perception of the Gothic was not limited to France, but commonly held throughout Europe from around 1500 to 1800, having been disseminated primarily by classicists during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.¹⁵⁴ In France, the maligning of Gothic architecture had been perpetuated by the likes of Molière (1622-1673) and Voltaire (1694-1778), yet it was the writings of Quatremère de Quincy in particular which ingrained pejorative associations regarding the Gothic in French academia.¹⁵⁵ In his *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture*, he described the Gothic as the ‘heir of all the abuses, of all the mixtures, of all the confusions born in the decadence of the arts’.¹⁵⁶ Quatremère de Quincy was a proponent of the rationalist school of architecture which arose during the Enlightenment, according to which the mathematical harmony of proportions often perceived in antique architecture was most valued.¹⁵⁷ According to a speech given by archbishop François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715) at the Académie française in 1693, one which

¹⁵⁴ Robert Bartlett, *Medieval Panorama* (Thames & Hudson, 2001), p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 12, 15; Bressani, p. 149.

¹⁵⁶ « Héritière de tous les abus, de tous les mélanges, de toutes les confusions nées dans la décadence des arts », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ (p. 467).

¹⁵⁷ Broadbent, pp 87-92.

constituted ‘an architectural metaphor announcing the commandments of rationalist architecture,’ he declared that ‘one must not admit in a building any part intended solely for ornament, but always aiming at beautiful proportions, we must turn into ornament all the parts necessary to support a building’.¹⁵⁸ Quatremère de Quincy’s gripe with the Gothic was precisely that it presented ‘no system of proportion’ since it lacked the universal modinature, or the ‘relations of form and measure between the members,’ of antique edifices; thus, the proportions varied from building to building, being determined at the architect’s discretion (Fig. 2.4).¹⁵⁹ This observation

¹⁵⁸ « Une métaphore architecturale annonciatrice des commandements de l’architecture rationaliste », ‘Architecture Rationaliste,’ Encyclopædia Universalis, n.d. <<https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/architecture-rationaliste/>> [Accessed 27 October 2024]; « Il ne faut admettre, dans un édifice, aucune partie destinée au seul ornement ; mais visant toujours aux belles proportions, on doit tourner en ornement toutes les parties nécessaires à soutenir un édifice », ‘Discours de réception de l’abbé de Fénelon,’ Académie française, n.d. <<https://www.academie-francaise.fr/discours-de-reception-de-labbe-de-fenelon>> [Accessed 27 October 2024].

¹⁵⁹ « Aucun système de proportion », « rapports de forme et de mesure entre les membres », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ (p. 467).

juxtaposed the Gothic as arbitrary and capricious against the calculated and reasoned, or rational Graeco-Roman architectural tradition.

For Viollet-le-Duc, however, rationality did not derive from a beautiful arrangement of proportions and ornament, but from the ‘harmony between form and function,’ from the clear and concrete relation ‘between structure and aesthetics’.¹⁶⁰ This view of rationalism was first conceptualised by Neoclassical architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780), however it was Viollet-le-Duc who brought it to the forefront of architectural theory and practice in the nineteenth century.¹⁶¹ It must be clarified that while this sort of rationalism is sometimes termed structural

¹⁶⁰ Jean-Yves Andrieux, ‘Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879): Rationalism, Invention, and the Science of Archeology,’ Digital Encyclopaedia of European History, 22 June 2020

<<https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/arts-in-europe/monument/eug%C3%A8ne-viollet-le-duc-1814-1879>> [Accessed 27 October 2024]; « Entre la structure et l’esthétique », Abraham, (p. 69).

¹⁶¹ Anna Mikhailovna Ivanova-Ilicheva, Alexander Mikhailovich Buchka, and Grigory Efimovich Shapiro, ““Structural Rationalism” as a Trend in Architecture of the Second Half of the XIX — Early XX Centuries: In the Context of the Cities in the South of Russia,’ *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 471 (2020), pp. 24-28.

rationalism in the twenty-first century, most scholars of Viollet-le-Duc make no formal distinction between it and Classical rationalism, simply using the latter term to refer to both.¹⁶² According to Jean-Michel Leniaud, Viollet-le-Duc's rationalist approach was a response to Quatremère de Quincy's maligning of the Gothic and was meant to demonstrate that 'medieval architecture responds to rational criteria'.¹⁶³ For Viollet-le-Duc, every element of the Gothic scheme corresponded to a discernible function, from the location and orientation of an edifice, down to the arrangement of the smallest filigree ornament. This idea was illustrated by Abraham, who, in *Viollet-le-Duc et le Rationalisme Médiéval* from 1934, asserted that 'there is not one decorative element to which Viollet-le-Duc did not want to attribute a rational function'.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that 'in all these great

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ « L'architecture médiévale répond à des critères rationnels », Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Viollet-le-Duc : Ou les délires du système* (Mengès, 1994), p. 41.

¹⁶⁴ « Il n'est pas un élément décoratif auquel Viollet-le-Duc n'ait voulu attribuer une fonction rationnelle », Abraham, (p. 85).

constructions made to contain entire populations' one will not find a single stone whose form does not satisfy a given purpose.¹⁶⁵

It is interesting to observe that despite there being no direct evidence in the *Annales* that Viollet-le-Duc referenced the works of Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852), who was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the latter described something remarkably similar to the notion of Viollet-le-Duc's rationalism in his 1836 book, *Contrasts: Or a parallel between the architecture of the 15th and 19th centuries*; published eight years before the creation of the *Annales*. According to Pugin:

The great test of Architectural beauty is the fitness of the design to the purpose for which it is intended, and that the style of a building should so correspond with its use that the spectator may at once perceive the purpose for which it was erected. Acting on this principle,

¹⁶⁵ « Dans toutes ces grands constructions faites pour contenir des populations entières », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu'au XVI^e siècle,' *Annales archéologiques*, 1 (1844), pp. 334-347 (p. 337).

different nations have given birth to so many various styles of Architecture, each suited to their climate, customs, and religion.¹⁶⁶

Unlike Viollet-le-Duc, for whom these factors were equally important in the development of architecture, Pugin stressed that the ‘religious ideas and ceremonies of these different people had by far the greatest influence in the formation of their various styles of Architecture’.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, Pugin described the relation of form and function in architecture as a mark of beauty, as opposed to an integral factor in its development. Nevertheless, the similarity between Viollet-le-Duc and Pugin’s ideas, notwithstanding the fact that Pugin was among the ‘savants and men of the world’ who come to ‘assure a good and lasting existence to the doctrines’ cited in the *Annales*, suggests that Viollet-le-Duc was aware his British contemporary’s work, and that he may have been influenced by them.¹⁶⁸ In fact, John Whichcord (1823-1885) of the Royal Institute of British Architects remarked that Viollet-le-Duc ‘extended the theory of those “true principles” of architecture which Pugin had earlier made the basis of a creed’ which would suggest this to be

¹⁶⁶ Pugin, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ « Savants et hommes du monde », « assurer une bonne et durable existence aux doctrines », [Anon.], ‘Renaissance du moyen âge,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 6 (1847), pp. 1-20 (p. 18).

true.¹⁶⁹ However, Whichcord did not cite a specific example regarding this claim, which would require further investigation to substantiate.

To further support the rationality of Gothic construction, Viollet-le-Duc explained how it was ‘submitted to fixed *rules*, to an *order*’ which was not arbitrary as Quatremère de Quincy claimed but designed to improve upon the utility and robustness of antique monuments.¹⁷⁰ This order prescribed that all arches and vaults be in the pointed or ogive form, built using small and light materials, with buttresses and flying buttresses on the exteriors.¹⁷¹ Additionally, all vault panels were to be separated by jutting ribs acting as limbs, which helped bear the weight of the vaults.¹⁷² Such a system allowed for the greatest and brightest possible interior voids, and for the transferral of each vault’s weight onto the piers and buttresses, with the walls

¹⁶⁹ ‘The President’s Address,’ (p. 1339).

¹⁷⁰ « Soumis à des *règles* fixes, à un *ordre* », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II (suite et fin),’ (p. 145).

¹⁷¹ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle,’ (pp. 341-342).

¹⁷² Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II (suite et fin),’ (p. 143).

themselves bearing no pressure.¹⁷³ Moreover, he cited the economy of Gothic architects as an extension of this rational construction principle; nothing went to waste, since every element had a purpose.¹⁷⁴ By employing simple methods, and ‘in not lavishing materials uselessly,’ they ‘raised monuments which, relative to the surface of ground covered, must have been *less* expensive’ than antique buildings.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, Gothic ornaments were limited to ‘certain parts of edifices’ such as capitals and mouldings, and statues of modest proportions occupied ‘but certain designated places’.¹⁷⁶ As such, in contrast to what Quatremère de Quincy and adherents of the Beaux-Arts maintained, Viollet-le-Duc termed Gothic monuments

¹⁷³ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle,’ (pp. 341-342).

¹⁷⁴ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre III (suite),’ (p. 329).

¹⁷⁵ « En ne prodiguant pas les matériaux inutilement », « élevé des monuments qui, relativement à la surface de terrain couverte, ont dû coûter *moins* cher », Ibid., (p. 329, 328).

¹⁷⁶ « Quelques parties des édifices », « que certaines places consacrées », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II (suite et fin),’ (p. 146).

‘masterpieces of reason and wisdom, of unity and grandeur. They were raised by men who knew the art they practiced inside and out’.¹⁷⁷ From the profile of mouldings and roofs catering to the cold and rainy French climate, to the ogive arches and vaults accommodating the increasing number of French Christians, Viollet-le-Duc used rationalism to simultaneously redeem the Gothic of any claims regarding its foreign origins or its capriciousness, and to assert its superiority.

It must be emphasized, however, that at least in the *Annales*, the superiority which Viollet-le-Duc attributed to the Gothic was not inherent, but dependent on its rationality. While he eventually added a more integral dimension to the Gothic’s rationality in later publications, this idea is not evinced in his contributions to the *Annales*. Bressani claims that in the journal, Viollet-le-Duc ‘primarily wished to prove the Gothic’s superiority: not only is it more Christian (or Catholic) and more French, it is also plainly superior’.¹⁷⁸ There is little grounds to contest Bressani’s claims about the Gothic being more Christian and French than any other style, according to

¹⁷⁷ « Chefs-d’œuvre de raison et de sagesse, d’unité et de grandeur. Ils furent élevés par des hommes qui connaissaient à fond l’art qu’ils pratiquaient », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle,’ (p. 337).

¹⁷⁸ Bressani, p. 166.

Viollet-le-Duc, however an analysis of his articles in the *Annales* suggests that the superiority of the Gothic was predicated on its being better suited to the French context. As put by Abraham, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that Gothic architecture ‘distinguished itself from others by a more intimate accord, if not perfect, between structure and aesthetic. Gothic architecture was “rational”, because it attained to beauty by the only means of construction necessary and without recourse to artifice’.¹⁷⁹ Just as Viollet-le-Duc asserted that the Greek and Roman styles lost their rationality and hence value upon being transported to France, so too would the Gothic, were it transposed to any other country, among any other nation.

That said, as was demonstrated by engineer Victor Sabouret’s (1851-1937) ‘Les voutes d’arêt nervurées : Rôle simplement décoratif des nervures’ and architect Abraham’s ‘Viollet-le-Duc et le rationalisme médiéval,’ published in 1928 and 1934 respectively, Viollet-le-Duc’s assertions regarding the rationality and robustness of the Gothic were contrary to evidence, often dramatically so. Sabouret showed how formeret arches, transverse arches, and ribs added no appreciable increase to the resistance

¹⁷⁹ « Se distinguait des autres par un accord plus intime, sinon parfait, entre la structure et l’esthétique. L’architecture gothique serait ‘rationnelle’, car elle atteindrait à la beauté par le seul moyen de la construction nécessaire et sans recourir à l’artifice », Abraham, (p. 69).

of vaults, and that the defining features of the Gothic generally owed to ‘a search for decoration’ rather than for improvements in utility, economy, or structural integrity; a search ‘which was pursued with obstinance’ to detrimental effect.¹⁸⁰ Abraham disproved Viollet-le-Duc’s claims about the elasticity of Gothic mortar, demonstrated that the pointed arch alone had no effect on the strength of a vault, and showed that transverse arches compromised a vault’s integrity by adding their own weight on top of it.¹⁸¹ He concluded that it was necessary to entirely abandon ‘the rational hypothesis’ of Viollet-le-Duc, since it was at such variance with ‘the state of the exact sciences, and above all, of the sciences applied to the twelfth and to the thirteenth century’.¹⁸² Together, Sabouret and Abraham’s writings definitively revealed Viollet-le-Duc’s rationalist doctrine, meant not only to redeem Gothic or French national architecture but also to act as the foundation for many of the arguments he made regarding architecture in his writings, to be the result of impression and imagination as opposed to

¹⁸⁰ « Une recherche de décoration », « qu’on poursuivait avec obstination », Victor Sabouret, ‘Les voûtes d’arêt nervurées : Rôle simplement décoratif des nervures,’ *Le Génie Civil*, 92.9 (1928), pp. 205-209 (pp. 208-209).

¹⁸¹ Abraham, (pp. 71-74).

¹⁸² « L’hypothèse rationaliste », « l’état des sciences exactes, et surtout des sciences appliquées, au douzième et au treizième siècle », *Ibid.*, (p. 78, 81).

investigation; further emphasising how his articles in the *Annales* constituted examples of nationalist propaganda.

A modern reclamation of national architecture

As has already been considered, Viollet-le-Duc and the other contributors of the decidedly nationalist *Annales*, were motivated by a desire to assert the French claim on the Gothic, and to vindicate it of the mostly pejorative connotations which had tarnished its name for centuries.

However, this thesis posits that, for Viollet-le-Duc especially, these nationalist arguments served to justify the revitalization of the Gothic in nineteenth-century France; or more specifically, his unique approach to the restoration of medieval monuments. In *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 1814–1879*, published in 2014, Bressani claims that Viollet-le-Duc's 'Essai sur l'origine' from 1852, which was a partially edited version of the earlier 'De la construction des édifices' published in the *Annales* between 1844 and 1847, 'served as a covert attack on the clan of Fortoul, Vaudoyer, and Reynaud' by stressing that the Gothic was an improvement on the Romanesque and other iterations of Classical architecture.¹⁸³ It could be added that Viollet-le-Duc's articles in the *Annales* were an attack on the Eclecticists' approach to restoration, and a means of

¹⁸³ Bressani, p. 205.

buttressing his own. To reiterate what was detailed in the introduction of this thesis, Viollet-le-Duc favoured a more invasive restoration approach which aimed for stylistic unity at the cost of removing or altering discordant anachronistic elements, while the Eclecticists sought to establish harmony between what they considered a continuum of styles. By asserting in the *Annales* that the Gothic was more suited for use in France than Classical architectural styles, as supported by his rationalist theory, he sought to justify the removal of non-Gothic elements in Gothic monuments. Since Classical architectural structure and decoration did not conform to the needs demanded by French mores, beliefs, climate, and materials, they had no place in French national monuments. An emblematic example of this approach is his removal of the Baroque ‘marble facings which covered the pillars of the chancel’ at Notre-Dame de Paris (Fig. 1.6) in the 1850s, installed during the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1718).¹⁸⁴ Despite ‘considerable hesitation’ being shown by the authorities, Viollet-le-Duc urged that the facings, originally designed by renowned architect Robert de Cotte (1656-1735) in 1703, were likely concealing structural damage which threatened the integrity of the monument and prevailed upon the authorities to approve

¹⁸⁴ [Anon.], ‘Restoration of Notre Dame,’ *The Building News*, 5 (1859), pp. 609-610 (p. 610).

their removal.¹⁸⁵ Saint-Paul also related how with the restoration of the basilica of Saint-Sernin de Toulouse in the early 1860s, Viollet-le-Duc removed certain fifteenth-century statues from the apse because he deemed them to be anachronistic, and had hoped to remove the steeple entirely since it, 'being ogival, at least in its superior parts, clashes with a Romanesque church, and that moreover it is too lofty and too elegant for the base which supports it.'¹⁸⁶ These examples encapsulate Viollet-le-Duc's 'artistic intolerance,' to borrow Saint-Paul's term, and the degree to which it shaped his restoration ideology and practice.¹⁸⁷

While Viollet-le-Duc's fellow Gothicists 'defended medieval architecture against the supporters of classicism and deplored pastiche in the creations' of the nineteenth century, they did not all agree with his ideas about historic restoration.¹⁸⁸ Lassus, who worked with Viollet-le-Duc on the restoration of the Sainte-Chapelle and Notre-Dame de Paris, generally

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ « Étant ogival, au moins dans ses parties supérieures, jure sur une église romane, et qu'en outre il est trop élevé et trop élégant pour la base qui le supporte », Saint-Paul, pp. 46-48.

¹⁸⁷ « Intolérance artistique », Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁸⁸ Bercé, 'Guilhermy, (Roch François) Ferdinand (Marie Nolasque), Baron de'.

shared in latter's tendency for 'removing later alterations' to Gothic monuments, and it was often the case with his projects that 'new sculpture was substituted for the old, the old often moved to museums.'¹⁸⁹ However, Lassus differed from Viollet-le-Duc in that he 'insisted on pragmatic and erudite solutions to his restorations,' demanding the use of historically accurate construction methods and materials, whereas Viollet-le-Duc 'frequently discarded historical accuracy for effect' and was prone to using anachronistic materials such as iron and stucco.¹⁹⁰ Viewing restoration from a decidedly archaeological perspective, de Guilhermy 'believed that intervention, whether repair or innovation, should be minimal'.¹⁹¹ He was opposed to 'the idea of stylistic unity' which typified Viollet-le-Duc's approach, and 'stressed the respect due to later additions' made to Gothic buildings.¹⁹²

Among the Gothicists, however, it was the creator of *the Annales* Adolphe-Napoléon Didron, who most fervently opposed purist restorations. He believed that 'restoration aimed at returning to the initial state of a

¹⁸⁹ 'Lassus, Jean-Baptiste'.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Bercé, 'Guilhermy, (Roch François) Ferdinand (Marie Nolasque), Baron de'.

¹⁹² Ibid.

building' constituted 'a destructive operation' and advocated instead for the 'consolidation, repair, and maintenance of the testimonies of the medieval period'.¹⁹³ Despite being a Gothicism, Didron's conception of the history of architecture closely mirrored that of the Eclecticists; claiming that 'the archaeologist sees the monument as the result of an evolution and campaigns of work over several centuries resulting in an organic unity,' one which a purist restoration 'dishonours and denatures,' more so than the worse sort of vandalism.¹⁹⁴ As was shown in the introduction, Viollet-le-Duc's lifelong friendship with Inspector-General of Historical Monuments Merimée did not signify a 'complete merging of opinions' between the two, and the latter made it clear that he did not recommend architects working with the commission for historic monuments to pursue purist restorations.¹⁹⁵ The fact that even among the Gothicists there were those

¹⁹³ « La restauration visant à revenir à l'état initial d'un édifice », « une opération destructrice », « la consolidation, la réparation et le maintien en l'état des témoignages de l'époque médiévale », 'Didron, Adolphe-Napoléon'.

¹⁹⁴ « L'archéologue conçoit le monument comme le résultat d'une évolution et de campagnes de travaux sur plusieurs siècles aboutissant à une unité organique », « déshonore et dénature », Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid; Bressani, p. 192.

who opposed the idea of a purist restoration approach further emphasises just how radical Viollet-le-Duc's ideas were at the time. Apart from Lassus, and Merimée to a degree, he did not have access to a network of likeminded architects or archaeologists who could support his ideas; something which his writings were meant, at least partly, to change.

The notion that Viollet-le-Duc's nationalistic articles in the *Annales* were intended to buttress this restoration approach is especially supported by a passage where he directly censured Eclecticism in the arts. In one article, he remarked that 'in an era bearing toward Eclecticism,' the science of archaeology 'forces the mind so well to class each work in the century to which it belongs, that all mixtures, all disorder becomes insupportable to it'.¹⁹⁶ He related an analogy about how someone familiar with old and modern French literature would not stand to read a text partly written in the style of prosaist François Rabelais (1483-1494), and partly in that of polymath Blaise Pascal (1623-1662).¹⁹⁷ By asserting that the combination of two different good things does not result in something good, he suggested

¹⁹⁶ « A une époque portée vers l'éclectisme », « force si bien l'esprit à classer chaque œuvre dans le siècle qui lui appartient, que tout mélange, tout désordre lui devient insupportable », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (p. 305).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., (p. 305).

that the preservation of conflicting architectural elements in a single monument, however worthy of admiration those elements may be separately, would not result in a work of art, let alone an admirable one. More than resulting in confusing or ugly edifices however, he maintained that Eclecticism in the arts, and in general a departure from pure national arts, always had serious consequences. From his perspective, the preservation of national architecture in its original or ideal form could only bring benefits to a nation, while the reverse was sure to result in degeneration.¹⁹⁸ He asserted that the suppression of national architecture in France which occurred under Louis XIV (1638-1715), who modelled his reign (1643-1715) upon the glories of ancient Rome, threw the nation ‘into the most complete anarchy, into an unheard-of disorder’.¹⁹⁹ It is much better, he claimed, to follow ‘a sage architecture which agrees with our country and our usages,’ and whose serious study ‘can still save us from disorder,’ and declared that when a country distances itself from good principles, it has a

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., (p. 307-308).

¹⁹⁹ « Dans l’anarchie la plus complète, dans un désordre inouï », Ibid., (p. 307).

duty to return thereto; ‘error must make neither custom, nor law, nor account’.²⁰⁰

He also stressed, contrary to the artistic policy of Louis XIV, that ‘when we have the fortune of possessing a national architecture, the best thing is to keep it,’ a fact to which he attributed ‘the incontestable superiority which the Italians and the Germans’ possessed over the French.²⁰¹ This superiority, he argued, lay in their ‘having always sought to grow and conserve the names of their artists; it is in having always respected their monuments, and especially in not having employed their faculties, for six

²⁰⁰ « Une architecture sage, qui convient à notre pays et à nos usages », « peut encore nous sauver du désordre », « erreur ne doit faire ni coutume, ni loi, ni compte », Ibid., (p. 308).

²⁰¹ « Lorsqu’on a le bonheur de posséder une architecture nationale, le mieux est de la garder », « la supériorité incontestable que les Italiens et les Allemands », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Du style gothique au dix-neuvième siècle,’ (p. 336); Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre IV,’ (p. 269).

centuries, in denigrating them in the eyes of Europe'.²⁰² In addition to criticising French academia's preferential treatment of Classical art and architecture to the point of vilifying the Gothic, here Viollet-le-Duc suggested that a country could attain to a higher level of civilisation by being better attuned to its native national identity; France was inferior to Italy and Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century precisely because it had diminished and stripped its own national arts of any real value. This idea recalls Viollet-le-Duc's first expression of nationalistic thought, as identified by Bressani, where he remarked that the value of a work of art is amplified by filial or national connection to the observer. As such, Viollet-le-Duc urged a return to the Gothic, the true national architecture and indelible representation of the French; 'brilliant and vivacious, born on our soil, that art exempt of all mixtures, and whose fine form, pure and true, owes to our genius, to our language, to our allure'.²⁰³

²⁰² « D'avoir toujours cherché à grandir et conserver les noms de leurs artistes ; c'est d'avoir toujours respecté leurs monuments, et surtout de n'avoir pas employé leurs facultés, pendant deux siècles, à les dénigrer aux yeux de l'Europe », Ibid., (pp. 269-270).

²⁰³ « Brillant et vivace, né sur notre sol, cet art exempt de tout mélange, et dont la forme fine, pure et vraie, tient à notre génie, à notre langue, à notre allure », Ibid., (p. 271).

His comparison of national arts in France to those in Italy and Germany is also noteworthy, as it demonstrates how he believed that the importance of distinguishing and preserving national artistic identity in its unadulterated form extended beyond the borders of France, a notion which he would expand upon in subsequent publications and which will be examined later in this thesis.

The importance of nationality and rationality to the Gothicists' crusade against the Beaux-Arts is something that scholars have not stressed enough. That said, the article 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national' from which much of Viollet-le-Duc's argument regarding the need to revitalize national architecture stems, does not feature prominently in scholarship of Viollet-le-Duc, being absent from Bressani's, Emery's and Poisson and Poisson's texts to name a few. Moreover, while Quatremère de Quincy's *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture* has been treated by many scholars since its publication, his claims regarding the criteria for national architecture only span a handful of sentences in his article 'Gothic' and has not been made the subject of investigation by scholars as yet. This would also explain why scholars have not argued that Viollet-le-Duc's approach to nationalism was heavily informed by the passage in question, and as such was characterised by a rationalist point of view.

Nevertheless, this chapter has shown that Viollet-le-Duc's articles in the *Annales*, and the journal itself to a degree, were conceived of as instruments of French nationalist propaganda which leveraged contemporary nationalist sentiment to justify a purist approach to historic monumental restoration. Among other Gothicists, Viollet-le-Duc intended foremost to establish the Gothic as the national architecture of France, and to characterise it as a logical and sophisticated construction system developed expressly to cater to French social and spiritual life, not to mention geographic and climatic aspects; none of which had altered significantly between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. This portrayal was a response to the notions that France had no more claim to the Gothic than any other nation, that it was the fruit of ignorance and disorder, and that Classical architecture had a monopoly on rationality and beauty; notions perpetuated in France since the Renaissance through to the eighteenth century, especially by the likes of Quatremère de Quincy and the Beaux-Arts. Viollet-le-Duc's refutation of such arguments served to justify his unorthodox purist approach to historic restoration, which was contrary to the mainstream Eclecticism practiced by his peers, and according to which Classical elements should be purged from Gothic monuments or made to harmonise with them; resulting in a cohesive, pure, Gothic totality. Viollet-le-Duc maintained that since these monuments were born of rational considerations, they should be restored to a state which respected a

direct relationship between form and function, something which the admixture of foreign Classical elements inhibited.

Chapter 2: The Dictionaries

Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle* and *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l'époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance*, published from 1854 to 1868 and from 1873 to 1874 respectively, portrayed the Gothic as the necessary consequence of the harmony between the three estates: the physical manifestation of French monarchical initiative, ecclesiastical contemplation, and national popular unity working in concert. This supported his argument regarding the affinity between the French nation and the Gothic made in the *Annales*, by adding a socio-political dimension to Quatremère de Quincy's criteria for defining national architecture. However, it exemplified an attempt to further localise the origin of the Gothic to France, since in the *Annales* his arguments regarding religious and geoclimatic factors could additionally apply to a broader milieu of northwestern Europe. Building on his dismissal of Islamic influences upon the Gothic in the *Annales*, he worked to definitively separate French national architecture from its Romanesque precursor, something which he had only done tentatively before, in order to enforce the French claim upon the Gothic and undermine the Eclecticists' preference for harmonising between Romanesque and Gothic elements in their restorations. The dictionaries featured many of the same rationalist arguments as the *Annales*, reiterating how the Gothic is 'intimately tied' to the history and 'intellectual conquests' of France, and to its 'national

character whose principal traits, tendencies, and direction it reproduces'.²⁰⁴ However, Viollet-le-Duc additionally considered how the Gothic was structuralist in nature, meaning that it was a complex puzzle of elements whose meaning derived from their correspondence to a greater system, rather than a capricious amalgam of disjointed members which could be separated and recombined without altering their intrinsic value; a quality which he attributed to Classical architecture, and on which he predicated its deficiency. It is also necessary to note that the dictionaries featured a more pronounced stance regarding the distinction of the French nation as a people, whose racial composition Viollet-le-Duc unpacked in detail and tied to his rationalist doctrine to further justify his unorthodox restoration methodology.

The Gothic as the symbol of the Three Estates

Between the Decembers of 1851 and 1852, the President of the Second French Republic, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon I

²⁰⁴ « Intimement liée », « conquêtes intellectuelles », « caractère national dont elle reproduit les traits principaux, les tendances et la direction », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, I, pp. 116-166 (p. 146).

Bonaparte, significantly altered the course of French history.²⁰⁵ After successfully staging a coup-d'état which reestablished universal male suffrage and dissolved the National Assembly, the lower house of the French parliament, Louis-Napoleon brought about the declaration of the Second French Empire, installing himself as emperor Napoleon III.²⁰⁶ Less than two years later, Viollet-le-Duc began his most famous work, the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, initially running from 1854 to 1868. The non-architectural counterpart to this text was the *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l'époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance*, first published between 1873 and 1874. While the latter was by no means an unsuccessful venture, the former was an immediate international success. The first four volumes sold out before the end of their publication, and Napoleon III himself requested six copies of each volume for his personal libraries.²⁰⁷ Soon after its release, it became common in publications concerning art history, archaeology, and architecture to read remarks like 'on this subject M. Viollet le Duc, in his excellent "Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture," just published, thus observes—,' and it was

²⁰⁵ Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of Napoléon III*, 4 vols (Longman, Green, 1877), iii.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Poisson and Poisson, p. 166.

praised as ‘containing many excellent things, which we might seek in vain elsewhere’.²⁰⁸ It was frequently recommended ‘to all those who desire to acquire theoretical, historic and practical knowledge of art and construction’ and it was said that it ‘should be in the hands of every architectural student’.²⁰⁹

As was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Bressani demonstrates that the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture*, ‘was an enterprise couched within Second Empire politics,’ and the *Essai sur l’architecture militaire au moyen âge*, ‘a slightly augmented’ version of the article on military architecture published alongside the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* in 1854, was

²⁰⁸ [Anon.], ‘Some Account of Crewe Hall and Nantwich,’ *The Builder*, 13 (1855), pp. 508-509 (p. 508); « Comme renfermant beaucoup d’excellentes choses, que l’on chercherait peut-être vainement ailleurs », [Anon.], ‘Séance du 16 Mars 1855,’ *Bulletin de la commission des antiquités départementales (Pas-de-Calais)*, 1.4 (1857), pp. 248-251 (p. 249).

²⁰⁹ « À tous ceux qui désirent acquérir des connaissances théoriques, historiques et pratiques dans l’art de bâtir », Félix Danjou, ‘Bibliographie,’ *Messenger du midi, journal du soir*, 23 September 1854, p. 3; [Anon.], ‘Mr. Scott’s Second Lecture on Architecture at the Royal Academy,’ *The Builder*, 16 (1858), pp. 99-100 (p. 99).

‘a eulogy to the creative inventiveness of France when menaced by invaders’; intentionally playing into the rebirth of the Napoleonic Empire to garner an even broader readership.²¹⁰ This could also be said of the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, particularly the fifth volume which looked at medieval French arms and armour, and which Viollet-le-Duc claimed was written to ‘bring out the efforts of intelligence which took so many generations to assure the independence of the fatherland by arms’ and to ‘instil in people’s minds the love of the craft of war’.²¹¹ These ideas echo Emery’s framing of the *Histoire d’un hotel de ville et d’une cathédral* as a work of nationalist propaganda, designed to inspire in French readers ‘a love of their nation while teaching them to appreciate Gothic architecture as an integral component of their shared history’; a description which could justly be applied to the dictionaries as well.²¹²

²¹⁰ Bressani, pp. 226-227.

²¹¹ « Faire ressortir les efforts d’intelligence qu’il a fallu à tant de générations pour assurer l’indépendance de la patrie par les armes », « faire pénétrer dans les esprits l’amour du métier de la guerre », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Armes de guerre offensives et défensives,’ in *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l’époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance*, 6 vols (Bance & Morel, 1874), v, pp. 1-9 (p. 9).

²¹² Emery, (p. 129).

However, before exploring the argument that the Gothic was ‘born with the French monarchy,’ the first part of his position regarding the relationship between national architecture and the three estates, Viollet-le-Duc described the affinity that had always existed between the kings of France and the spirit of the nation itself.²¹³ He claimed that the French monarchy was ‘the only which has been really national, which has identified itself with the spirit of the population, and this is what has made its strength and its growing power despite its faults and its setbacks.’²¹⁴ This characterisation of the French monarchy was likely meant to associate it with the notion of popular sovereignty, which, ever since the French revolution of 1789, had become a political cornerstone in France, at least in theory.²¹⁵ Viollet-le-Duc seemingly wished to express that France’s return to a monarchy in 1852 was not necessarily at odds with its libertarian socio-political character. In fact, he sought to demonstrate the very opposite.

²¹³ « Née avec la monarchie française », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 142).

²¹⁴ « La seule qui ait été réellement nationale, qui se soit identifiée à l’esprit de la population, et c’est ce qui a fait sa force et sa puissance croissantes malgré ses fautes et ses revers », Ibid., (p. 134).

²¹⁵ Edward James Kolla, *Sovereignty, International Law, and the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

More importantly, however, this claim suggests that the French monarchy was superior to other monarchies in the Middle Ages as in the nineteenth century, in that it was in harmony with the mass of the nation, whereas other contemporary or historic monarchies were characterised by a despotic or authoritarian, and therefore inferior form of governance according to enlightenment ideas.²¹⁶

Viollet-le-Duc related that it was under the reign of Philippe II Auguste (1165-1223), known for having begun the expansion of the royal domain out from around Paris and Orléans in the second half of the twelfth century, when the French nation and national architecture had simultaneously materialised (Fig. 2.1).²¹⁷ As will be considered in the next sub-chapter in more detail, it was the king himself who initiated the creative process that resulted in the Gothic. Viollet-le-Duc claimed that ‘when the unity of monarchical power began to be established, this unity, supported by secular artists belonging to recognised corporations, had to, by the natural force of things, form a centre of art which would radiate on all sides

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture religieuse,’ in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, I, pp. 166-241 (p. 239).

at the same time as its political action'.²¹⁸ Here he evoked the idea that the French monarchy played an integral role in the development of the Gothic. Bressani echoes this point when considering Viollet-le-Duc's account of the emancipation of the third estate, which he claimed was brought about by the construction of France's cathedrals, itself facilitated by the proactivity of the nobility and the wisdom of monastics.²¹⁹ Bressani adds that the monarch's role in this process was 'that of a rallying point for the lay body, crystallising the idea of unity in his own person.'²²⁰ Viollet-le-Duc emphasised that in the middle of the thirteenth century, the monarch achieved a symbolic national status among the population, who, 'reassured by the predominance of royal power, became accustomed to considering it the representation of national unity, finding authority with justice in its

²¹⁸ « Quand l'unité du pouvoir monarchique commença de s'établir, cette unité, secondée par des artistes laïques faisant partie de corporations reconnues, dut, par la force naturelle des choses, former un centre d'art qui allait rayonner de tous côtés en même temps que son action politique », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' (p. 140).

²¹⁹ Bressani, p. 290.

²²⁰ Ibid.

shadow'.²²¹ This connotes how in addition to the political stability which they brought about from the twelfth century, it was the French monarchy's representation and protection of the people above all else, which was central to their facilitating the creation of the Gothic, or so Viollet-le-Duc wished to express. For him, this safe socio-political environment established by the early French kings was just as much a factor in his rationalist theory of the Gothic's origins as was the geographical or climatic environment, and only further concretised the notion that the national architecture was exactly that; the necessary result of the context amid which it arose.

Regarding the clergy, Viollet-le-Duc related how it had been instrumental in cradling the nascent French artistic genius in the tumultuous feudal period, during which the monarchy was in the process of wresting authority from powerful nobles and uniting the nation.²²² It was in the bosom of the second estate, 'sheltered by the walls of the cloister, to

²²¹ « Rassuré par la prédominance du pouvoir royal, s'habituant à le considérer comme la représentation de l'unité nationale, trouvant sous son ombre l'autorité avec la justice », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Cathédrale,' in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, 9 vols (Bance & Morel, 1859), II, pp. 279-392 (p. 283).

²²² Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' (p. 122).

which the elevated, delicate, and thoughtful minds came to seek refuge'.²²³ Acting as safe havens for scholars, monastic communities 'took on a great importance vis-à-vis the population of the cities through their resistance to the blind despotism of feudalism and its spirit of disorder'.²²⁴ Moreover, the presence of these religious bastions gave 'to the arts, and particularly to architecture, a great boost' whose influence resonated far outside of France and was not long limited to religious architecture.²²⁵ Of note, the style developed in the monastery of Cluny became a blueprint for many monasteries across France and indeed western Europe (Fig. 2.2).²²⁶ Likewise did 'simple parishes, rural constructions, and public city monuments take as

²²³ « À l'abri des murs du cloître que viennent se réfugier les esprits élevés, délicats, réfléchis », Ibid.

²²⁴ « Prenaient dès lors une grande importance vis-à-vis la population des villes par leur résistance au despotisme aveugle de la féodalité et à son esprit de désordre », Ibid., p. 124.

²²⁵ « Aux arts et particulièrement à l'architecture un grand essor », Ibid., p. 125.

²²⁶ Ibid.

their models these centres of richness and light'.²²⁷ Underlining that the Gothic began as a form of Christian architecture further entrenched the idea, first expressed in the *Annales*, that it was especially suited for use by a Christian population, whether in religious, civic, palatial, or even military architecture. Perhaps more importantly, however, is that Viollet-le-Duc's portrayal of the monastic communities as nurseries for the Gothic saplings, schools for those who would go on to raise great Gothic monuments, lent itself to his assertions regarding the rational thought that went into conceiving the Gothic construction system. In this way, he could frame it as the product of its environment, while circumnavigating the notion of what his predecessors and peers termed 'the centuries of ignorance'; thereby evoking that the Gothic was not the result of crudeness or barbarism, but of enlightened thought and quiet reflection.²²⁸ It is also noteworthy that Viollet-le-Duc portrayed French religious centres such as Cluny as the height of medieval artistic and academic society, with 'an advanced local industry, independent, possessing its own processes and taste,' to which

²²⁷ « Les simples paroisses, les constructions rurales, les monuments publics des villes prenaient leurs modèles dans ces centres de richesse et de lumière », Ibid.

²²⁸ « Les siècles d'ignorance », Quatremère de Quincy, 'Gothique (Architecture),' (p. 457).

scholars and artisans from all over Europe would come to study, thereby aiding in spreading the germ of the Gothic from its fatherland.²²⁹ He stressed, however, that the confluence of great minds from all over did not compromise the uniquely French character of Gothic monuments, claiming that they were ‘executed by men born of the soil, not having suffered influences of which they knew not the origin’.²³⁰ As was seen in chapter one, contemporary scholars agreed that while the French were not alone in forming the Gothic, their country was the site of its first growth. It seems Viollet-le-Duc exploited this technicality to justify his claim that by materialising first in France, the Gothic had to have been exclusively French.

Cognisant of the reality that the republican sentiment and political ideology born with the revolution of 1789 was ever present in the Second Empire, Viollet-le-Duc was careful to emphasise that the third estate played

²²⁹ « Une industrie locale avancée, indépendante, possédant ses procédés et son goût propre », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 120); Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc ‘Conclusion,’ in *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l’époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance*, 6 vols (Bance & Morel, 1873), I, pp. 419-431 (p. 423).

²³⁰ « Exécutés par des hommes nés sur le sol, n’ayant subi que des influences dont ils ne connaissaient pas l’origine », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 135).

the most important role in the formation of the national architecture; neither the monarchy, nor the clergy were above the body of the nation.²³¹

In fact, one of the most marked aspects of the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* is Viollet-le-Duc's insistence on the emancipation of the third estate from monarchical and monastic authority, and of its importance vis-à-vis the character and origins of the Gothic. As was hinted at earlier, he asserted that the early French kings did away with the traditional feudal system of the Frankish kings and allowed the Gothic or national architecture to thrive under a new period of popular liberty.²³² He maintained that with the advent of the twelfth century, 'the secular corporations of the royal domain began to take charge of the arts in all the provinces of France.'²³³ He attributed the ascendance of the national genius to the moment 'when architecture passed from the hands of the clerics to the hands of the laity'.²³⁴ Here he stressed that despite the nation being comprised of three socio-

²³¹ Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848–1945* (Oxford University Press, 1973).

²³² It was under the Capetians that the Estates General was established.

²³³ « Les corporations laïques du domaine royal commençaient à prendre la direction des arts sur toutes les provinces de France », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' (p. 134).

²³⁴ « Quand l'architecture eut passé des mains des clercs aux mains des laïques », Ibid., (p. 145).

political strata, Gothic architecture was ‘inaugurated by lay artists,’ by the people of the third estate.²³⁵ As proof of this popular seizure of the national arts, he cited the laity’s purification of the Gothic from its hieratic Romanesque forms and of the ‘oddities favoured by monks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries’; replacing the strange sculptural figures and scenes which recalled ancient Rome and Greece with depictions of vegetation from French fields and forests.²³⁶ Thus, Gothic architecture, having drawn ‘its inspirations from the heart of this indigenous fraction, the most numerous in the nation’ and having become the property of the secular third estate, ‘was neither theocratic nor feudal. It was an independent, national art, which accommodated all needs’.²³⁷ Here Viollet-le-Duc accentuated that the people completed the process of creating the Gothic, begun by the monarchy and nurtured by the clergy; making it truly French in the process. The implication of this notion is that the Gothic corresponded superlatively to

²³⁵ ‘Inaugurée par les artistes laïques », Ibid., (p. 140).

²³⁶ « Bizarreries affectionnées par les moines des onzième et douzième siècles », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Cathédrale,’ (p. 300).

²³⁷ « Ses inspirations dans le sein de cette fraction indigène, la plus nombreuse de la nation », « n’était ni théocratique ni féodale. C’était un art indépendant, national, qui se pliait à tous les besoins », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 153).

the French people, as opposed to Classical architectural traditions which were imposed upon them by the likes of Louis XIV, and which had not been formed in the unique crucible of French history. While Viollet-le-Duc's arguments in the *Annales* about the Gothic arising from a need to shelter Christian congregations from the cold and the rain could be applied to other nations in Northwestern Europe, his assertions regarding the relation between the singular social and political history of the French nation and the Gothic made its claim seem much more exclusive.

In the eyes of Viollet-le-Duc, Gothic monuments, especially religious ones, came to be considered the physical representations of national genius.²³⁸ He did not deny that they had a religious significance, but was convinced that they were 'above all national buildings [...] the symbol of French nationality, the first and most powerful attempt towards unity,' an idea which has been picked up on by scholars such as Bressani and Emery among others as a mark of anticlericalism and republicanism.²³⁹

Compelling as the idea of the Gothic cathedral being a national monument may be, however, it is brought into question by a consideration of Jules

²³⁸ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Cathédrale,' (p. 281).

²³⁹ « Surtout des édifices nationaux [...] le symbole de la nationalité française, la première et la plus puissante tentative vers l'unité », Ibid., (p. 281); Bressani, p. 276; Emery, (p. 129).

Henri Leclercq de Laprairie's (1803-1893) 'Observations sur le Dictionnaire d'architecture de M. Viollet-Le Duc' from 1872. Drawing from medieval and modern annals, acts, and histories dealing with religious construction in the French Middle Ages, the author asserted that 'there is no reason to believe that the bourgeois considered the cathedral as a civil monument' and that 'nothing confirms the supposition of a school of secular architects who, apart from monastic schools, would have invented and applied the new system of architecture employed for all the large churches built from 1140'.²⁴⁰ These conclusions suggest that Viollet-le-Duc's claims about the Gothic being the symbol and fruit of the third estate's labours were less founded on empirical evidence than a desire to impress the idea upon the reader. Leclercq de Laprairie clarified that these were not objective

²⁴⁰ « Il n'y a aucun motif de croire que les bourgeois ont considéré la cathédrale comme un monument civil », « rien ne vient confirmer la supposition d'une école d'architectes laïques qui, en dehors de écoles monastiques, auraient inventé et appliqué le nouveau système d'architecture employé pour toutes les grandes églises construites à partir de 1140 », Jules Henri Leclercq de Laprairie, 'Observations sur le Dictionnaire d'Architecture de M. Viollet-Le Duc,' *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, historique, et scientifique de Soissons*, ser. 2, 3 (1872), pp. 158-190 (p. 188).

architectural observations, in which regard he had no intention of questioning Viollet-le-Duc's expertise, but rather 'theories' and 'historic estimations,' which he deemed were within anyone's rights to contest.²⁴¹ Leclercq de Laprairie's appraisal of the information presented in the dictionary as fact gives further credence to the argument that Viollet-le-Duc authored nationalist propaganda, even if it was woven often seamlessly among exact descriptions of historic monuments. This recalls the idea mentioned in chapter one about the Gothicists seeking to reconcile the Gothic with the modern French context. By associating it with contemporary socio-political ideas, which did not exist in the same form in the Middle Ages, they sought to make the Gothic relevant and dispel notions of it relating exclusively to the Dark Ages. Moreover, Viollet-le-Duc's characterisation of the Gothic as the consequence of France's socio-political character, which was an expansion of Quatremère de Quincy's criteria for designating national architecture, reinforced his position that the Gothic should be given the first place in restorations of Gothic monuments. Just as he claimed the original Gothic architects devised of a system which catered to their physical, spiritual, and intellectual context, so too should this principle be observed in restoring those same monuments in the nineteenth century. After all, as he noted in the *Annales*, the essence of the French

²⁴¹ « Théories », « appréciations historiques », Ibid., (p. 159).

nation had not changed since its formation in the twelfth century, any more than the French climate or geography.

The distinction of the French race

It is important to consider how the publication of the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* and the *Dictionnaire du mobilier* in the mid-to-late eighteenth hundreds coincided with a growing scholarly interest in race and its implications for human development and cultural expression.²⁴² Works like Georges Cuvier's (1769-1832) *Le Règne animal distribué d'après son organisation* published in 1816, Arthur Schopenhauer's (1788-1860) *Parerga* and *Paralipomena* from 1851, Arthur de Gobineau's (1816-1882) *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* published between 1853 and 1855, and Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) *On the Origin of Species* from 1859, testified to an emergent

²⁴² Biological race is defined as 'a taxonomic group into which a species is divided, arising from relative reproductive isolation of populations from one another owing to geographic and other barriers, containing organisms that are genetically differentiable from other members of the same species by the relative frequencies of their polymorphic genes'. 'Race,' *Oxford Reference*, n.d.

<<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100400695>> [Accessed 30 October 2024].

avenue of study which, although often degenerating into pseudoscience as will be seen, was of great importance in the age of nationalism. The notion of race began to feature increasingly in nationalistic movements toward the end of the nineteenth century and beyond, with notable examples being the German Volkish movement in which the idea of ‘racial differences was exploited to lend validity to claims of national distinction and superiority’ from the 1880s onward; the ethnicisation and ‘aggressively xenophobic’ racialisation of Russian nationalism which occurred between the mid-1860s and 1917 (Fig. 2.3); and the Pan-Turkism movement, originating in the 1880s, ‘*which aimed to politically and/or culturally unify all Turkic peoples*’.²⁴³ While mainstream contemporary French nationalism was of a more ethnic than racial character, predicated on shared linguistic, religious, and cultural heritage, as with the Greek nationalist movement, Viollet-le-Duc began to weave notions of race and racial differences into his works in a way

²⁴³ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004), p. 4; Emil Abramovich Pain, ‘Contemporary Russian Nationalism: Dynamics of Political Role and Content,’ *Bulletin of Public Opinion: Data. Analysis. Discussions*, 122.1-2 (2016), pp. 126-139 (pp. 127-129); *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua Fishman and Ofelia Garcia, 2 vols (Oxford University Press, 2011), II, p. 269.

that more closely resembled late nineteenth and early twentieth-century German nationalism.²⁴⁴

It should be stressed that the publication of the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*'s first volume in 1854 coincided with the release of Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* published between 1853 and 1855, one of the most notorious texts exhibiting what is now termed racialism or scientific racism, the pseudoscientific study of the notion that humanity comprises several distinct races, whose unique characteristics predicate the superiority of some over others.²⁴⁵ As shown by Bressani, Gobineau and Viollet-le-Duc were fond of one another's works, with Viollet-le-Duc's racial theory, which will be examined in more depth in chapter three, being especially inspired by Gobineau's ideas.²⁴⁶ The essence of these ideas was that mankind could be divided into three races: 'white,' 'yellow,' and 'black,' to use Gobineau's terms.²⁴⁷ According to him, 'the two inferior

²⁴⁴ Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, Two-Volume Set, ed. by Alexander Motyl, 2 vols (Academic Press, 2000), i, p. 170, 201.

²⁴⁵ John Jackson and Nadine Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction* (Rutgers University Press, 2004).

²⁴⁶ Bressani, pp. 351-353.

²⁴⁷ « Blanche », « jaune », « noire », Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Firmin-Didot, 1884).

varieties of our species, the black race, the yellow race, are the coarse substances, cotton and wool, which the secondary families of the white race soften by mixing their silk, while the Aryan group, circulating its thinner threads through the ennobled generations, applies to their surface, in dazzling masterpiece, its arabesques of silver and gold'.²⁴⁸ This analogy underlined Gobineau's belief that distinctions between various socio-political strata were universally and rightfully determined by race. Whether in ancient Greece, Gaul, India, Egypt, or indeed anywhere, he claimed that a greater proportion of white blood necessitated a higher socio-political status which evolved into long-established hierarchies.²⁴⁹ Moreover, he

²⁴⁸ « Les deux variétés inférieures de notre espèce, la race noire, la race jaune, sont le fond grossier, le coton et la laine, que les familles secondaires de la race blanche assouplissent en y mêlant leur soie, tandis que le groupe arian [*sic*], faisant circuler ses filets plus minces à travers les générations ennoblies, applique à leur surface, en éblouissant chef-d'œuvre, ses arabesques d'argent et d'or », Ibid., II, p. 539. According to a now discredited theory, the Aryan race was a population of superior stock belonging to the white race, which conquered the Indus Valley sometime before the birth of Christ, and then migrated into India, Iran, and Europe. Knight Dunlap, 'The Great Aryan Myth,' *The Scientific Monthly*, 59.4 (1944), pp. 296-300.

²⁴⁹ De Gobineau, II, pp. 168-169.

maintained that the differences between races were so entrenched, that 'one could almost be authorised to affirm' that the institution of slavery 'results just as much from the consent of the one who suffers it as from the moral and physical predominance of the one who imposes it'.²⁵⁰

However, while the white races could ennoble the others by mixing with them and forming hybrids such as the Greek race, being a mixture of white and yellow, this process inevitably diluted the native virtues of each race, tending toward 'mediocrity of physical force, mediocrity of beauty, mediocrity of intellectual aptitudes' of mankind.²⁵¹ Thus, through a process of miscegenation, 'nations, no, human herds, overwhelmed by a dreary drowsiness, will henceforth live numb in their nothingness, like the buffalo ruminating in the stagnant puddles of the Pontine marshes.'²⁵² Although

²⁵⁰ « On serait presque autorisé à affirmer », « résulte tout autant du consentement de celui qui le subit que de la prédominance morale et physique de celui qui l'impose », Ibid.

²⁵¹ « Médiocrité de force physique, médiocrité de beauté, médiocrité d'aptitudes intellectuelles », Ibid., p. 560.

²⁵² « Les nations, non, les troupeaux humains, accablés sous une morne somnolence, vivront dès lors engourdis dans leur nullité, comme les buffles ruminants dans les flaques stagnantes des marais Pontins », Ibid., pp. 560-561.

Viollet-le-Duc did not overtly call for the separation of racial groups in his writings, Gobineau's ideas can be seen to have filtered into them and were used by him to his own ends. In the dictionaries, Viollet-le-Duc built significantly on what he claimed regarding the nature of the French in the *Annales*, asserting that they were not merely a nation, but a race with a unique racial composition. This thesis posits that by adding a racial dimension to his conception of French nationality, Viollet-le-Duc sought to root it in a unique physical, biological foundation; one that could further distinguish it from others in Europe. Moreover, his racialisation of French nationality was meant to strengthen his position regarding the restoration of Gothic monuments to their original Gothic state, since that architectural tradition was as much the result of race as it was of climate, mores, beliefs, and materials; making it more worthy of use in France than Greek or Roman architecture, which were the fruits of other races' labours and genius entirely.

Viollet-le-Duc understood the French race as the product of two distinct components: one Gallo-Roman, and the other Frankish.²⁵³ The term Gallo-Roman refers to the Gaulish cultural and ethnic group which had been Romanised between the first century BCE and the fifth century CE, at which point the Franks, a Germanic people originating from the middle and

²⁵³ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' (pp. 117-129).

lower Rhine, conquered Gaul and made it Francia (France).²⁵⁴ According to Viollet-le-Duc, the ‘indigenous Gallo-Roman population’ comprised the older and more dominant component of French blood.²⁵⁵ In the fifth century CE, the ‘barbarian hurricane’ passed through Gallo-Roman lands, resulting in the establishment of the Frankish chieftains as the ‘new masters of the soil’.²⁵⁶ He claimed that while the warlike Franks arrived as conquerors, they eventually laid down permanent roots, established the feudal system, and began to contribute to the development of the French nation, its architecture, and its fine arts.²⁵⁷ During the crusades, when many Frankish nobles departed for the holy land, ‘the distinctions of victorious and vanquished races, of Franks and Gallo-Romans’ were weakened each day by the state of relative peace and cooperation between the three

²⁵⁴ Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); John Frederick Drinkwater, ‘Franks,’ Oxford Classical Dictionary, 22 December 2015

<<https://oxfordre.com/classics/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-2720>> [Accessed 30 October 2024].

²⁵⁵ « La population indigène gallo-romaine », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 127).

²⁵⁶ « L’ouragan barbare », « les nouveaux maîtres du sol », Ibid., (p. 117).

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

estates.²⁵⁸ Thus, by the time Philippe II Auguste was forming the nation, as Viollet-le-Duc claimed, the French had begun to coalesce into a single racial fusion.²⁵⁹ In Jean-Michel Leniaud's *Viollet-le-Duc ; Ou les délires du système*, the author asserts that for Viollet-le-Duc, the notions of race and nation had become one and the same, and that he saw racial identity as an 'intangible abode,' a spiritual counterpart to the physical nation itself.²⁶⁰ Yet I would stress that Viollet-le-Duc saw biological race itself as a very tangible quality; something as impossible to divorce from the nation as its mores and beliefs, if not more so. The centrality of race in Viollet-le-Duc's narrative of the French nation and national architecture is also underlined by Jean Nayrolles, who, in 'la théorie des proportions de Quatremère de Quincy a Viollet-le-Duc,' points out that according to Viollet-le-Duc, 'Northern France reunited the Aryan elements necessary to give birth to a great art' in the

²⁵⁸ « Les distinctions de race vainqueurs et de vaincus, de Francs et de Gallo-Romains », Ibid., (p. 129).

²⁵⁹ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture religieuse,' (p. 239).

²⁶⁰ « Demeure intangible », Jean-Michel Leniaud, p. 46.

thirteenth century; there is no mistaking that Viollet-le-Duc was couching the Gothic in an explicitly racial context.²⁶¹

More than doing so, however, he stressed that the French race possessed certain immutable qualities which distinguished it from others in Europe, both in the Middle Ages and the nineteenth-century, and which served to buttress his claims regarding the rationality and French origins of the Gothic. According to the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, the populations of the French heartlands above all, comprising the basins of the Seine, Loire, and Somme rivers, were 'endowed with a flexible, innovative mind, quick to grasp the practical side of things, active, mobile, reasoning, guided rather by *common sense* than by imagination'.²⁶² In the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, he claimed that the French soldier in particular 'knows well how to equip himself quickly in the most commodious manner. This faculty, we have always possessed, and our military equipment presents wholly unique

²⁶¹ « La France du Nord au treizième siècle réunissent les éléments aryens nécessaires pour donner naissance à un grand art », Jean Nayrolles, (p. 377).

²⁶² « Doués d'un esprit souple, novateur, prompt à saisir le côté pratique des choses, actif, mobile, raisonneur, dirigés plutôt par le *bon sens* que par l'imagination », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' (p. 144).

practical qualities'.²⁶³ By designating common sense, practicality, and the ability to reason as characteristics native to the French race, Viollet-le-Duc was further justifying the arguments he made in the *Annales* regarding the affinity between the French and the Gothic, whose system of construction was nothing if not governed by rationality. It was no less a manifestation of French racial characteristics than it was the result of sociopolitical or geoclimatic circumstances. Likewise, this perspective suggests that the capriciousness of Classical architecture, as Viollet-le-Duc presented it, was fundamentally at odds with the French race, which not only preferred, but demanded rationality in its arts as in its armaments. By extension, the Eclectic approach to restoration which accommodated non-native elements in Gothic monuments, was portrayed by Viollet-le-Duc as incompatible with the true nature of the French. It is also possible to transpose upon Viollet-le-Duc's opposition to Eclecticism, Arthur de Gobineau's ideas about how the mixture of races or nations caused the gradual dilution of their vitality, creativity, and ingenuity to a point of degeneration. Since the Gothic corresponds to the French race, and the Classical styles do not, the

²⁶³ « Sait bien vite s'équiper de la façon la plus commode. Cette faculté, nous l'avons toujours possédée, aussi nos équipements militaires présentent-ils des qualités pratiques toutes particulières », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Armes de guerre offensives et défensives,' (p. 8).

mixture of the two was resulting in the weakening of the original French character to a state where it was without power or originality. Viollet-le-Duc did not vocalise such an idea in his dictionaries, but it is very possible that contemporary readers drew the connection between them and the sort of texts outlined at the beginning of this sub-chapter.

The separation of Gothic and Romanesque architecture

In the *Annales*, Viollet-le-Duc did not make much of an argument regarding the separation between Gothic and Romanesque architecture, merely questioning how it was possible to account for the development of the Gothic ‘unless we acknowledge this resolution’ that it broke entirely with the Romanesque tradition which was ‘extinguished little by little and finished with the end of the tenth century’.²⁶⁴ In the dictionaries however, he argued for a more distinct and immediate separation between the two. He explained how the beginnings of the Gothic could be traced back to the reign of Charlemagne (748-814), who was inspired by the legacy of the

²⁶⁴ « A moins d’admettre cette résolution », « s’éteint peu à peu et finit avec la fin du dixième siècle », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle,’ (p. 341).

ancient Roman Empire to transform his kingdom.²⁶⁵ In addition to bringing back ‘grammarians, musicians, and mathematicians’ from Rome, Charlemagne used his oriental alliances to gather scholars from Arabia, Syria, Zaragoza, Huesca, Cordoba, Byzantium, and Damascus to his court.²⁶⁶ But while Viollet-le-Duc acknowledged the role which these advanced foreign civilisations must have played in the formation of the Gothic, he maintained that there was a distinct separation between the ingredients and the product. For him, the Gothic was ‘neither Roman nor Oriental art, but that which, departing from these two origins, produced a new trunk which was so lively, that it would after several centuries spread its branches as far as the countries from where it drew its seed’.²⁶⁷ In another passage he described the Gothic as having thrown off the ‘Romanesque envelope, in

²⁶⁵ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 119).

²⁶⁶ « Des grammairiens, des musiciens et des mathématiciens », Ibid., (pp. 119-120).

²⁶⁷ « Ni l’art romain ni l’art d’Orient, mais qui, partant de ces deux origines, devait produire un nouveau tronc tellement vivace, qu’il allait après quelques siècles étendre ses rameaux jusque sur les contrées d’où il avait tiré son germe », Ibid., (p. 120).

which it found itself ill at ease'.²⁶⁸ These analogies allowed Viollet-le-Duc to address the generally accepted artistic and scientific influences which came from outside France, while minimising and compartmentalising them in a separate sphere, so as not to compromise the French originality of the Gothic.

However, in order to sever it more definitively from Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic influences, which were still being felt throughout French architecture and the decorative arts in the eleventh century, Viollet-le-Duc argued that the expansion of the royal domain, or crown estate, which had 'remained almost foreign to these influences,' resulted in the establishment of a new, purely 'Gallo-Roman,' or French art.²⁶⁹ During this expansion, which took place at the beginning of the twelfth century under Philippe II Auguste (1165-1223), the crown 'rejected anything excessive in these foreign elements; it chose, so to speak, among all these elements, those which best suited its tastes, its habits, and it formed a national art as it

²⁶⁸ « L'enveloppe romane, dans laquelle il se trouvait mal à l'aise », Ibid., (p. 145).

²⁶⁹ « Était resté presque étranger à ces influences », « gallo-romaine », Ibid., (p. 139).

founded a national government'.²⁷⁰ It is interesting to note how the process of discarding certain Romanesque, Byzantine, and Islamic elements which Viollet-le-Duc attributed to the Philippe II Auguste's reign, and which he claimed initiated the creation of the Gothic, mirrors his own purist approach to restoring historic monuments. It seems Viollet-le-Duc presented the architectural curation effected by the crown, specifically by Philippe II Auguste, as a precedent which he could follow; it was a way of legitimising a restoration methodology which favoured the removal of undesirable, discordant elements. Furthermore, despite acknowledging the impact of Romanisation on French culture and suggesting that certain foreign elements endured within the Gothic, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that it constituted an entirely 'new system of architecture' having 'enfranchised itself completely from Roman traditions' by the thirteenth century.²⁷¹ He further accentuated this notion by remarking that in the Gothic, the

²⁷⁰ « Repousse ce qu'il pouvait y avoir d'excessif dans ces éléments étrangers ; il choisit, pour ainsi dire, parmi tous ces éléments, ceux qui conviennent le mieux à ses goûts, à ses habitudes, et il forme un art national comme il fonde un gouvernement national », Ibid.

²⁷¹ « Nouveau système d'architecture », « s'affranchit complètement des traditions romaines », Ibid., (p. 141).

‘layouts, construction, statics, ornamentation, and scale differ absolutely’ from those followed in antique architecture.²⁷²

As was considered in Chapter one, Viollet-le-Duc’s account of the geography and chronology of the Gothic’s formation generally aligns with the state of twenty-first-century scholarship, however his claims regarding medieval French architecture ‘stripping itself completely’ of Roman, Byzantine, or Islamic influences, were, and still are contrary to contemporary understanding.²⁷³ Regarding this notion, Saint-Paul remarked in *Viollet-le-Duc, ses travaux d'art et son système archéologique* that the Gothic ‘did not superimpose itself on Romanesque art, it did not supplant it; it did not smother it; it is, on the contrary, the highest result, the final progress, the apogee, the consummation, the accomplishment’.²⁷⁴ This idea echoes Fortoul, Vaudoyer, and Reynaud’s perception of the French architectural continuum, which was the motivation behind their Eclectic

²⁷² « Les dispositions, la construction, la statique, l’ornementation, l’échelle diffèrent absolument », Ibid., (p. 142).

²⁷³ « Se dépouillant alors complètement », Ibid., (p. 143).

²⁷⁴ « Ne s’est pas superposé à l’art roman, il ne l’a pas supplanté, il ne l’a pas étouffé ; il en est, au contraire, le plus haut résultat, le dernier progrès, l’apogée, la consommation, l’accomplissement », Saint-Paul, p. 123.

approach to restoration. As remarked by Van Zanten, Reynaud and Vaudoyer stressed that ‘the pointed arch, held to be the distinctive mark of the Gothic, is but a natural outcome of ribbed vaulting, evolving slowly out of the Romanesque as that style developed’.²⁷⁵ Contrary to Viollet-le-Duc, the Eclecticists claimed that Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic architecture were not a series of static and separate organs, but inflections of a single arcuated style of medieval Christian architecture which was constantly evolving over time; a conception of French architectural history which was supported by an academic consensus.²⁷⁶

However, as pointed out by Leclercq de Laprairie in ‘Observations sur le Dictionnaire d’architecture de M. Viollet-Le Duc’ from 1869, Viollet-le-Duc himself provided evidence in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* which, rather than buttressing his theory of the Gothic’s rapid rise and separation from the Romanesque, undermined it significantly. Leclercq De Laprairie remarked how when a reader of the dictionary passes over Viollet-le-Duc’s historical narratives and personal judgements, considering only the detailed descriptions of monuments from the tenth to the sixteenth century, ‘they remain convinced that a more or less rapid movement, depending on the times, but incessant, occurred from the first Romanesque edifices up to the

²⁷⁵ Van Zanten, p. 50.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

Renaissance,' and do not perceive 'a veritable stop, nor very abrupt transformations'.²⁷⁷ This reader will even deduce that the Gothic had 'necessarily been born in some way from the last efforts of Romanesque art'.²⁷⁸ Yet, if a reader disregards the detailed descriptions of the monuments and focuses on 'the art-historical part and the systems of the author,' they are left with the impression that the Romanesque 'stayed almost stationary up to the end of the twelfth century' and that it was 'replaced from scratch by the Gothic architecture that produced all our great cathedrals' in a single swift movement.²⁷⁹ Leclercq de la Prairie's analysis illustrated that the empirical evidence, being the objectively and minutely depicted monuments, supported the Eclectic conception of a medieval Christian

²⁷⁷ « Elle reste convaincue qu'un mouvement plus ou moins rapide, selon les moments, mais incessant, se produit depuis les premiers édifices romans jusqu'à la Renaissance », « arrêt véritable, ni de transformations très-brusques », Leclercq de Laprairie, (p. 159).

²⁷⁸ « Né en quelque sorte forcément des derniers efforts de l'art roman », Ibid.

²⁷⁹ « La partie historique de l'art et aux systèmes de l'auteur », « est restée presque stationnaire jusqu'à la fin du douzième siècle », « remplacer de toutes pièces par l'architecture gothique qui a produit toutes nos grandes cathédrales », Ibid.

architectural continuum, rather than Viollet-le-Duc's notion that the Gothic was definitively separated from the Romanesque. The latter's insistence on the idea that the Gothic arose almost overnight as if out of thin air, should be conceptualised as a way for him to justify the stylistic purification of monuments in his restorations; he suggested that their construction did not span different eras with different styles, being wholly contained in one Gothic architectural movement; something which is evidenced in his work at Notre-Dame de Paris. In 1856, an observer writing for the British journal, *The Builder*, noted:

The general uniformity of style in a building so vast as Notre Dame of Paris, is very striking to an eye accustomed to the varieties observable in most of our cathedrals. Although its erection occupied a considerable period of time, there is a remarkable correspondence in character throughout.²⁸⁰

Despite making the point tentatively, the author clearly underlines how Viollet-le-Duc's restoration methodology did not reflect the combination of styles typically seen in Gothic cathedrals, as stressed by the Eclecticists. While this was written from a British perspective, it is important to note that mainstream nineteenth-century architects on both sides of the

²⁸⁰ [Anon.], 'The Builder: Vol. XIV.—No. 684,' *The Builder*, 14 (1856), p. 137.

channel defined the aim of restoration in the same way: the consolidation of that which is decaying or destroyed and the reproduction of that which manifestly existed, all while respecting the original disposition of the monument, and without having recourse to fantasy or invention in order to fill gaps or satisfy artistic concerns.²⁸¹ The fact that Viollet-le-Duc's approach was as at odds with his British contemporaries is especially poignant since, as was explained in the *Annales archéologiques*, French archaeologists and restorers had taken their lead from the British, who had pioneered the practice of historic restoration.

A similar observation to the one made by Leclercq de la Prairie can be found in an appraisal of the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, published in the *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* in 1860, by incumbent perpetual secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Charles Ernest Beulé (1826-1874). According to Beulé, Viollet-le-Duc provided his readers with 'the perfect opportunity, especially armed as we are with the excellent book he has published,' to contradict his claim that 'that the furniture of the Middle Ages was inconvenient, rare, little varied, heavy, that they are at odds with our

²⁸¹ [Anon.], 'Restauration and Restoration,' *The Builder*, 33 (1875), pp. 963-965 (p. 963; 'The SPAB Manifesto,' The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, n.d. <<https://www.spab.org.uk/about-us/spab-manifesto>> [Accessed 30 October 2024]; Xavier Darcos.

habits'.²⁸² Much like Leclercq de Laprairie, Beulé's point was that Viollet-le-Duc's uncommon skill in depicting historic works of art provided readers with an understanding which undermined the arbitrary theories he wished to impress upon them. Viollet-le-Duc's nationalist arguments in the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* took on a similar form in the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, where he transposed his claims about medieval French architecture divorcing itself from foreign elements, onto the decorative and 'industrial arts'.²⁸³ According to him, the last traces of Byzantine art in the Gothic, which consisted of vegetal ornamentation imitating non-native flora, were 'completely effaced' by the thirteenth century.²⁸⁴ In fact, he declared that 'up

²⁸² « L'occasion belle, surtout armés que nous sommes de l'excellent livre qu'il publie », « que les meubles du moyen âge étaient incommodes, rares, peu variés, lourds, qu'ils sont en désaccord avec nos habitudes », Charles Ernest Beulé, 'Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français par M. Viollet-le-Duc, architecte,' *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics*, 18 (1860), pp. 76-83 (p. 79).

²⁸³ « Les arts industriels », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Conclusion,' (p. 423).

²⁸⁴ « Complètement effacées », Ibid.

until the end of the twelfth century, it cannot be said that there was any French furniture; this was no longer the case in the thirteenth'.²⁸⁵

However, just like his nationalisation of architecture, his case for the uniquely French character of the Gothic decorative and industrial arts was at variance with mainstream scholarship. In his appraisal of the text, Beulé wrote that 'whatever power and originality the author attributes to the thirteenth century, it is impossible that this century was not attached by close links to the past; that it did not preserve Byzantine forms and even Roman traditions'.²⁸⁶ It is fair to interpret that Viollet-le-Duc's insistence on

²⁸⁵ « Jusqu'à la fin du douzième siècle, on ne peut dire qu'il y ait un mobilier français ; il n'en est plus ainsi au treizième », Ibid.

²⁸⁶ « Quelles que soient la puissance et l'originalité que l'auteur prête au XIII^e siècle, il est impossible que ce siècle ne se rattachât pas par des liens étroits au passé ; qu'il n'eût pas conservé des formes byzantines et même des traditions romaines », Beulé, (pp. 77). It may be tempting to argue that Beulé would naturally have contradicted Viollet-le-Duc, seeing as the two represented opposing poles in the French artistic world, the Gothic, and the Classical. However, Beulé's impartiality regarding both Viollet-le-Duc and Gothic architecture is well demonstrated in the introduction of his article; 'when it concerns theory and the principles of art history, I have the regret

‘the power and originality’ of the Gothic, to quote Beulé, belies his opposition to the notion that it was but a continuation, a consequence of Romanesque, Byzantine, and Islamic traditions.²⁸⁷ It seems as though Viollet-le-Duc equated this idea with dependence, or subordination, weakness even, which would explain his repeated use of the word ‘enfranchise,’ to refer to the Gothic being disconnected, or rather disconnecting itself, from foreign components.²⁸⁸ By asserting the novelty and independence of French national architecture, Viollet-le-Duc sought to empower it in the face of contemporary misconceptions and attribute its development to none but the genius of its people. The most significant

of sometimes being the adversary of M. Viollet-le-Duc: this does not prevent me, in questions of simple archaeology and of the application of erudition, to read him with eagerness and to rejoice if I share his opinions’. « Quand il s’agit de théorie et de principes de l’histoire de l’art, j’ai le regret d’être quelquefois l’adversaire de M. Viollet-le-Duc : cela ne m’empêche pas, dans les questions de simple archéologie et d’application de l’érudition, de le lire avec empressement et de me réjouir si je partage ses opinions », Ibid., (p. 76).

²⁸⁷ « La puissance et l’originalité », Ibid., (p. 77).

²⁸⁸ « Affranchir », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Conclusion,’ (p. 423); ‘Architecture,’ (p. 142).

implication of the Gothic's supposed enfranchisement from the Romanesque is that there was a clear point at which the former ended, and the latter began, contrary to the idea maintained by the Eclecticists. By asserting this stylistic severance, Viollet-le-Duc hoped to give credence to idea that certain architectural elements clearly belonged on one side of an architectural line or the other, which would justify the removal or alteration of any which found itself on the wrong side. As he remarked in the *Annales*, an archaeological understanding of the distinctions between periods and styles of architecture, and indeed all arts, made their mixture incongruous at best, abhorrent at worst.

The structurality of Gothic architecture

In the *Annales*, Viollet-le-Duc predicated the superiority of the Gothic upon its use in France alone, since it corresponded to the mores, beliefs, materials, and climate native to that country. However, in the dictionaries, he began to assert that the Gothic possessed a sort of pre-eminence which was independent of its relating to contextual factors, raising it further above Classical architecture and its derivations. He was careful to remark that the originality and novelty of the Gothic compared with the Romanesque did not consist of haphazardness or disorder, the sort of stereotype imposed upon it by the likes of Quatremère de Quincy, and which was widely accepted among the adherents of the Beaux-Arts. In his *Encyclopédie*

méthodique : Architecture, the former argued that the Gothic ‘would only have been a new product, if you will, of the corruption of all that was ancient’.²⁸⁹ On the contrary, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that with the Gothic, ‘everything is ordained, logical, harmonious,’ and as he argued in the *Annales*, it was entirely original.²⁹⁰

Reiterating the rationalist argument made in the *Annales*, he claimed that at the beginning of the thirteenth century, ‘almost all Romanesque monuments, religious, civil or military, could no longer satisfy new needs, particularly in the royal domain’.²⁹¹ By virtue of their narrowness and the large mass of their interior columns, the Romanesque churches ‘could not accommodate the numerous meetings of the faithful, in cities whose population and wealth were growing rapidly; they were sad and dark, crude

²⁸⁹ « N’aurait été qu’un produit nouveau, si l’on veut, de la corruption de tout ce qui était ancien », Quatremère de Quincy, ‘Gothique (Architecture),’ (p. 460).

²⁹⁰ « Tout est ordonné, logique, harmonieux », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 142).

²⁹¹ « Presque tous les monuments romans, religieux, civils ou militaires, ne pouvaient plus satisfaire aux besoins nouveaux, particulièrement dans le domaine royal », Ibid., (p. 143).

in appearance, and were no longer in harmony with already advanced customs and civilisation'.²⁹² In like manner, he pointed out that the Roman arts had themselves been developed according to the needs and nature of Roman society.²⁹³ Those great innovators of ancient Italy 'who had at their disposal armies accustomed to public works, who could throw a population of barbarian slaves on a construction, had adopted the mode which best suited this social state'.²⁹⁴ In addition to maligning Roman architecture as the fruit of slave labour, here Viollet-le-Duc underlined that in medieval France, where the third estate was not enslaved but emancipated by its benevolent and pragmatic rulers, such means or forms could not have been more inappropriate.

²⁹² « Ne pouvaient convenir aux nombreuses réunions de fidèles, dans des villes dont la population et la richesse s'accroissaient rapidement ; elles étaient tristes et sombres, grossières d'aspect, et n'étaient plus en harmonie avec des mœurs et une civilisation avancée déjà », Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid., (p. 142).

²⁹⁴ « Qui avaient à leur disposition des armées habituées aux travaux publics, qui pouvaient jeter une population d'esclaves barbares sur une construction, avaient adopté le mode qui convenait le mieux à cet état social », Ibid.

In the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, which marked a step in a new direction for Viollet-le-Duc, he expanded his idea concerning the rationality of national architecture to the decorative and technical arts. According to Viollet-le-Duc, the French people of the Middle-Ages ‘searched for the form most appropriate for daily habits,’ they ‘searched for the most rational processes of structure’ in all forms of art, from clothing and furniture to utensils and weaponry and everything in between.²⁹⁵ He attributed this state of affairs to the fact that ‘at that time art was not separated from industry, it was not made an object of luxury for a privileged few, for a caste isolated from the rest of the nation, having or pretending to have its mysteries forbidden to the profane’.²⁹⁶ Here Viollet-le-Duc not only extolled the virtues of the medieval French, but also framed the refinement of the Gothic arts as the result of their democratisation, their popularisation. As

²⁹⁵ « Cherche la forme la mieux appropriée aux habitudes journalières », « cherche les procédés de structure les plus rationnels », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Toilette’ in *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l’époque carlovingienne à la Renaissance*, 6 vols (Bance & Morel, 1873), IV, pp. 403-495 (p. 429).

²⁹⁶ « Alors on ne séparait pas l’art de l’industrie, on n’en faisait pas un objet de luxe pour quelques privilégiés, pour une caste isolée du reste de la nation, ayant ou prétendant avoir ses mystères interdits aux profanes », Ibid.

will be seen in chapter four, it seems that this portrayal of medieval arts was meant to contrast with the elitism and exclusivity of the arts under the reign of Louis XIV and his successors, notwithstanding the ascendance of the Beaux-Arts. Viollet-le-Duc even implied one could ‘assess the political state of a people and its degree of liberal civilisation’ by examining its clothes foremost, but also its other artistic tastes and aptitudes.²⁹⁷ An implication of this idea is that in nineteenth-century France, where the arts were hoarded by the wealthy and gate-kept by the Beaux-Arts, the state of civilisation was not as elevated as it could have been; an idea which further justified Viollet-le-Duc’s call for a return to the Gothic.

While Viollet-le-Duc briefly considered in the *Annales* how a nation’s architecture is not only determined by its mores, climate, and materials, but also by the physical characteristics and needs of the people themselves, he expanded upon this idea in his dictionaries, remarking that the dimensions of Gothic architecture, which he called a form of clothing in and of itself, were relative to the proportions of the human body, unlike those of Classical edifices. He related how, looking at an image of a temple of Antiquity, it is ‘impossible to say if the columns of this temple are four, five, or ten metres high,’ whereas with the Gothic, structures are always designed

²⁹⁷ « Apprécier l’état politique d’un peuple et son degré de civilisation libérale », Ibid., (p. 430).

with ‘the human scale’ in mind, allowing for the size of a building to be easily appreciated no matter its dimensions.²⁹⁸

Enter the cathedral of Reims or a village church from the same period, you will find the same heights, the same basic profiles; the columns lengthen or shorten, but they maintain the same diameter, the mouldings multiply in a large building, but they are of the same dimension as those of the small one.²⁹⁹

He contrasted this absolute scale to the relative or modular scale used in Classical architecture, which took a measurement from a certain part of the building as a point of reference for the whole, thus being independent

²⁹⁸ « Impossible de dire si les colonnes de ce temple ont quatre, cinq ou dix mètres de hauteur », « l'échelle humaine », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 147).

²⁹⁹ « Entrez dans la cathédrale de Reims ou dans une église de village de la même époque, vous retrouverez les mêmes hauteurs, les mêmes profils de bases ; les colonnes s’allongent ou se raccourcissent, mais elles conservent le même diamètre, les moulures se multiplient dans un grand édifice, mais elles sont de la même dimension que celles du petit », Ibid.

from fixed exterior dimensions.³⁰⁰ With this arbitrary reference of scale being infinitely variable, Viollet-le-Duc claimed it was only possible to appreciate the size of Antique monuments ‘when we have placed a man near them as a point of comparison, and even then it is rather the man who seems small, and not the monument which looks great.’³⁰¹ Lassus illustrated this point in an article from the *Annales* by citing Saint-Peter’s Basilica in

³⁰⁰ *Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*, ed. by Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks (Yale University Press, 1998), p. 206; According to Palladio, the height of a column in the Corinthian order, including its base and capital, ought to be nine and a half times its diameter at the widest portion (nine and a half modules), the height of its capital should be one and a sixth module, and the entablature (architrave, frieze, and cornice) ought to be a fifth of the column’s height (Fig. 2.5). Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture*, trans. by Isaac Ware (n. pub., 1738), pp. 21-22; Palladio used the diameter of the column’s widest portion as the module, however some other architects such as Vitruvius used the radius. Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, *The Five Orders of Architecture*, trans. by Tommaso Juglaris and Warren Locke (Berwick & Smith, 1889).

³⁰¹ « Lorsqu’on a placé près d’eux un homme comme point de comparaison, et encore est-ce plutôt l’homme qui paraît petit, et non le monument qui semble grand », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Architecture,’ (p. 148).

Rome, where the Antique system of proportions renders it ‘impossible to appreciate the prodigious dimensions’ of the building, despite the immense resources that were spent in raising it and the grand effect it was intended to have.³⁰²

With the argument of the Gothic scale being based on human proportions rather than the relative scale of Classical architecture, Viollet-le-Duc suggested that the former was more suited for use by mankind than the latter, regardless of the national context, making it not only relatively, but inherently superior. This would even imply that in Greece and Italy, the native Greek and Roman architecture could not attain to the same degree of rationality as the Gothic in France, so long as their system of proportion was not pinned down by some objective reference of measurement.

This notion of an inherent rather than relative superiority is also evidenced by a section of the article ‘Cathédrale’ in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture*, where he expressed that the Gothic was not just a representation of the harmony between the French nation and its arts, but the notion of harmony itself. In the text, he contrasted this harmony with melody, which he used to refer to the Greek architectural tradition in particular. He related that harmony, in a musical sense, referred to ‘the

³⁰² « Impossible d’apprécier les prodigieuses dimensions », Lassus, (p. 201).

arrangement and disposition of simultaneous sounds'; a concept which was unknown to the ancient Greeks, who only practiced what is called antiphony, 'which is to say, octaves produced by the voice of men and women or children singing the same melody'.³⁰³ Viollet-le-Duc used this analogy to characterise Greek architecture as a primitive agglomeration of independent elements, which corresponded as little to the ensemble of the edifice as they did to each other.³⁰⁴ He added that if a layer of the melody is removed, it may be utilised somewhere else without detriment to its integrity; 'remove an order from a Greek temple, and it will always be an order that you may apply to a palace, to a house, to a tomb.'³⁰⁵ However, if an element of a harmony or symphony is removed from its context, it loses all sense, 'since harmony is such but by the simultaneity of sounds'.³⁰⁶ The point of the analogy seems to be to suggest that unlike with Greek architecture, each element of a Gothic edifice derives its meaning and

³⁰³ « L'arrangement et la disposition des sons simultanés », « c'est-à-dire les octaves produits par des voix d'hommes et de femmes ou d'enfants chantant la même mélodie », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Cathédrale,' (p. 384).

³⁰⁴ Ibid., (pp. 384-385).

³⁰⁵ « Enlevez un ordre d'un temple grec, ce sera toujours un ordre que vous pourrez appliquer à un palais, à une maison, à un tombeau », Ibid., (p. 385).

³⁰⁶ « Puisque l'harmonie n'est telle que par la simultanéité des sons », Ibid.

function from its relation to all other elements; it is ‘the concurrence of all members toward a common centre; science which imposes itself upon form; reason which dominates matter’.³⁰⁷

This analogy exemplifies how Viollet-le-Duc developed a structuralist perspective of Gothic architecture; something which was treated in depth by Hubert Damisch (1928-2017) in his *Viollet le Duc : L’Architecture raisonnée : Extraits du dictionnaire de l’architecture française*, published in 1964. It is worth noting that Viollet-le-Duc hinted at a structuralist stance regarding the Gothic in the *Annales*, stating that if one removes a piece, the ensemble is destroyed, however the idea was addressed more explicitly and extensively in later works such as the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture*, as will be shown.³⁰⁸ Structuralism is an interdisciplinary school of thought which aims to prioritise ‘on the one hand the totality over the individual, on the other hand the synchronicity of facts rather than their evolution, and finally the relationships which unite these facts rather than the facts themselves in

³⁰⁷ « Le concours de tous les membres vers un centre commun ; la science qui s’impose à la forme ; la raison qui domine la matière », Ibid., (p. 386).

³⁰⁸ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle,’ (p. 337).

their heterogeneous and anecdotal character’.³⁰⁹ Although structuralism was first formally developed in the contexts of sociology, anthropology, and linguistics in the late nineteenth century, and was only widely applied to architecture in the mid-to-late twentieth century, Viollet-le-Duc’s characterisation of Gothic architecture is unmistakably structuralist.³¹⁰

In his commentary on the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture*, Damisch argued that the text itself was designed to impart upon the readers the structuralist idea ‘which Viollet-le-Duc formed from the relation between the architectural totality and its constitutive elements’.³¹¹ Damisch stressed that Gothic construction was bound by a law of top-down hierarchical subordination, explaining how ‘the outline of the vaults will determine the distribution of support points on the ground, right down to the profile of

³⁰⁹ « D’une part la totalité par rapport à l’individu, d’autre part la synchronicité des faits plutôt que leur évolution, et enfin les relations qui unissent ces faits plutôt que les faits eux-mêmes dans leur caractère hétérogène et anecdotique », ‘Structuralisme,’ Larousse, n.d.<<https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/structuralisme/74914>> [Accessed 1 November 2024].

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ « Que Viollet-le-Duc a formée du rapport entre la totalité architecturale et ses éléments constitutifs », Damisch, p. 13.

the supports, and their cross-section, whereas the Greek system was contrarily thought out entirely “from below”, starting with the order, and foremost with the column.’³¹² However, while Damisch argued that Viollet-le-Duc saw structurality as an attribute of all construction systems, with the Gothic being the most exemplary, there is in fact evidence in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* that the latter reserved this quality for the Gothic. In addition to the analogy of melody and harmony just considered, which suggests that Viollet-le-Duc did not view Greek architecture as a structural system, he remarked in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* that Roman constructions ‘presented immobile, passive masses, as monuments carved from a single block of tuff might be’; with the idea of a solid mass being diametrically opposed to that of a combination of separate yet concordant elements necessitated by a structural scheme.³¹³ Unlike Gothic

³¹² « Le tracé des voûtes déterminera la répartition au sol des points d’appui, et jusqu’au profil des supports, à leur section, alors que le système grec était au contraire pensé tout entier ‘par le bas’, à partir de l’ordre, et d’abord de la colonne », Ibid., p. 17.

³¹³ « Présentaient des masses immobiles, passives, comme le pourraient être des monuments taillés dans un seul bloc de tuf », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Construction : Principes,’ in *Dictionnaire raisonné de*

buildings, they ‘did not offer a concrete ensemble, linked, a perfectly stable agglomeration,’ nor did they admit or develop ‘the principle of independence between the diverse parts of the building’.³¹⁴ Thus, contrary to Damisch’s claim, Viollet-le-Duc stressed in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* that the Gothic was structural, while ‘antique construction, all of one piece, absolute in its means’ was not; it technically comprised an agglomeration of separate architectural members, but they functioned as a single inert and inflexible mass.³¹⁵ His writings contradict Damisch’s claim that ‘architectural syntax cannot be reduced to the combination of conventional forms of equal and constant value,’ which is how he depicted Classical architectural forms, at least in the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture*.³¹⁶

l’architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle (Bance & Morel, 1859), IV, pp. 11-62 (p. 13).

³¹⁴ « N’offraient pas un ensemble concret, lié, une agglomération parfaitement stable », « le principe d’indépendance entre les diverses parties de la bâtisse », Ibid., (p. 13, 33).

³¹⁵ « La construction antique, tout d’une pièce, absolue dans ses moyens », Ibid., (p. 58).

³¹⁶ « La syntaxe architecturale ne se réduit pas, comme le voudrait l’enseignement académique, à la combinaison de formes conventionnelles de valeur égale et constante », Damisch, pp. 16-17.

The idea of the Gothic having a definite architectural syntax, as Damisch puts it, was completely absent from Quatremère de Quincy's writings.³¹⁷ As related by Nayrolles in 'La théorie des proportions de Quatremère de Quincy à Viollet-le-Duc,' Quatremère de Quincy asserted that the Gothic was 'conceived outside of all deducible rules, relating only to caprice,' and that it 'forbade itself all relation of form and measure between its members'.³¹⁸ Additionally, he concluded that since the Gothic was devoid of an apparent system of proportions, 'it must be forbidden to attempt its restitution or restoration because each one of these practices is exclusively founded on the regular character of Graeco-Roman art'.³¹⁹ While the Eclecticists did not share in Quatremère de Quincy's position regarding the impossibility of restoring Gothic edifices outright as evidenced by their work on Gothic monuments, they did not view Gothic architecture as the result of 'exclusively functional and social determinants,' that it was a

³¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

³¹⁸ « Conçus en dehors de toute règle déductible, ne relevant que du caprice », « s'interdit tout rapport de forme et de mesure entre ses membres », Nayrolles, (p. 358).

³¹⁹ « On devra s'interdire d'en tenter la restitution ou la restauration car l'une et l'autre de ces pratiques sont exclusivement fondées sur le caractère régulier de l'art gréco-romain », Ibid., (p. 359).

complete integral construction system in and of itself, or that it should be restored according to that point of view.³²⁰ Thus, it was essential for Viollet-le-Duc to address the notion of the Gothic's capricious or arbitrary proportions and frame it as a structuralist system in order to ensure the validity of his own restoration approach. Indeed, this idea is supported by Nayrolles' claim that the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* itself was a direct response to Quatremère de Quincy's characterisation, or rather maligning, of the Gothic in his *Encyclopédie méthodique : Architecture*.³²¹

Arguably the most significant implication of Viollet-le-Duc framing the Gothic as a structuralist system was the notion that it derived its value from remaining whole. As pointed out by Damisch, Viollet-le-Duc characterised it as a system according to which the form of the superficies determined those of the lower sections all the way to the ground, meaning that a change in this hierarchy would compromise not only the aesthetic balance, but the functionality of the whole.³²² This would mean that an Eclectic restoration which incorporated alterations made to a Gothic edifice, no matter how small, could throw it out of balance, and detract from its value. The restoration of the cathedral of Notre-Dame d'Évreux (Fig. 2.6),

³²⁰ Van Zanten, p. 68.

³²¹ Nayrolles, (p. 372).

³²² Damisch, p. 17.

conducted by Denis Darcy under Viollet-le-Duc's supervision in the 1870s, is an example which testifies to this point of view. The latter stated that the upper exterior works of the edifice 'had been revised so many times, that today they have, from the point of view of art or the history art, no value. The flying buttresses, notably, conserve perhaps not a single stone from their original construction, *and nothing proves that their current curvature is that which the architect from the end of the thirteenth century adopted.*'³²³ In addition to underlining his tendency to restore buildings according to what he imagined to be their original conception, this statement illustrates how he valued modified or adulterated Gothic monuments much less than those with their primitive structure and ornament intact. He added that '*this irrational, badly made structure, out of proportion with the object, is of a pitiable effect*' and that Darcy's proposal was '*satisfying for reason and for the eye, and*

³²³ « Ont été remaniées tant de fois, qu'elles n'ont aujourd'hui, au point de vue de l'art ou de l'histoire de l'art, aucune valeur. Les arcs-boutants, notamment, ne conservent peut-être plus une seule pierre de leur construction primitive, *et rien ne prouve que leur courbure actuelle soit celle que l'architecte de la fin du treizième siècle avait adoptée* », [Anon.], 'Le cas de la cathédrale d'Évreux,' *Congrès archéologique de France*, 42 (1876), pp. 383-501 (p. 434).

that it does not lead to useless expenses.’³²⁴ This invasive restoration was fervently decried by archaeologist Jacques-Hippolyte Raymond Bordeaux (1821-1877) among others, who claimed that in seeking to ‘completely rebuild the whole first storey of the nave and replace, with a heavily modified copy, one of the most interesting monuments in the history of Norman architecture,’ Viollet-le-Duc ‘had thrown consternation into the city.’³²⁵ The fact that contemporary observers were so opposed to the restoration indicates just how radical Viollet-le-Duc’s approach to restoration was, and why it was important for him to convince people of its justness through works such as the *Dictionnaire de l’architecture* and the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*.

This tendency for preserving a monument in a single pure style as a means of maintaining its value differed significantly from the Eclectic

³²⁴ « *Cette structure irrationnelle, mal faite, hors de proportion avec l’objet, est d’un pitoyable effet* », « *satisfaisante pour la raison et pour l’œil*, et qu’elle n’entraîne pas à des dépenses inutiles », Ibid.

³²⁵ « *Rebâtir absolument à neuf tout le premier étage de la nef et remplacer, par une copie très-modifiée, un monument original des plus intéressants pour l’histoire de l’architecture normande* », « *a jeté la consternation dans la ville* », Ibid., (p. 436).

standpoint. As put by Van Zanten, Vaudoyer's objective with the Priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs was 'preserving and articulating the specific architectural history manifested in these buildings, gathered over a period of seven centuries at this spot in Paris'.³²⁶ Unlike Viollet-le-Duc's custom, Vaudoyer 'neither imposed a single historical style nor restricted himself to a consistent "modern" style (although he has modified the Gothic and the Baroque in his additions and framed the whole, when seen from the Chautemps, behind a Néo-Grec frontispiece)'.³²⁷ Van Zanten underlines how for the Eclecticists, stylistic mixtures were a testament to a building's history, and in fact were the mark of its value to society in the present day, whereas Viollet-le-Duc predicated this value on a representation of a single period in a building's history, isolated in space and time.³²⁸ Fortoul even asserted that rather than being devalued by mixing with Classical elements, as Viollet-le-Duc claimed, the Gothic would be given value in a contemporary context precisely 'through its synthesis with Greek building, both understood as natural emanations of man's mind'.³²⁹ Van Zanten adds that with respect to the restoration and expansion of the city hall of Paris in 1837 by Étienne-

³²⁶ Van Zanten, p. 111.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

Hippolyte Godde (1781-1869) and Jean-Baptiste Lesueur (1794-1883), Fortoul censured how they applied a unified stylistic ‘routine that they could not justify by any example from the best period of Antiquity,’ in much the same way that Viollet-le-Duc restored historic monuments, and stressed that ‘he would have preferred was the mixing of styles to bring out the history of the building’.³³⁰

As has been shown in this chapter, Viollet-le-Duc’s dictionaries functioned as vehicles of nationalist propaganda, which embraced arguments similar to yet distinct from those made in the *Annales*. Namely, Viollet-le-Duc added sociopolitical and racial factors to Quatremère de Quincy’s criteria for designating national architecture and predicated the superiority of the French nation on both; an addition which can be attributed to the concurrent rebirth of the Second French Empire, and the growing fascination with ideas of race and nationality in the second half of the nineteenth century. Additionally, he claimed that the Gothic could be completely distinguished from the anterior Romanesque tradition, and that as a construction system bound by rational and structuralist laws, it was possible to reconstruct a Gothic monument in its entirety. Moreover, he stressed that the value of the Gothic derived from its remaining an integral system with all parts relating to a whole; a value which was diminished by

³³⁰ Ibid.

the admixture of Classical elements which were only bound by relative or arbitrary rules of proportion; not to mention being at odds with French mores, beliefs, climate, materials, socio-political character, and even race. Together, these ideas served to justify his position that Classical or derivative styles such as the Romanesque had no place in Gothic monuments and should thus be removed or altered to unify the edifice and restore its formal and functional integrity.

Chapter 3: The 'Antiquités américaines'

Viollet-le-Duc's essay, 'Antiquités américaines,' published as part of explorer and archaeologist Désiré Charnay's (1828-1915) *Cités et ruines américaines : Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* in 1863, codified his conception of the effect which a nation's customs, mores, beliefs, climate, materials, sociopolitical character, and above all racial composition had on the origin and development of its architecture. This argument, which played into contemporary French nationalist, imperialist, and colonialist ambitions, served to support his opposition against the Eclectic restorers by suggesting that rationality was not just a prerequisite to beauty or worth, as he had argued in the *Annales* and the dictionaries, but the natural governing principles in all construction systems; an idea which echoed contemporary ideas in evolutionary science regarding the correspondence between an organism's form, function, and environment. He was thus looking to ground his tendency for restoring Gothic monuments to what he saw as their original state, respecting stylistic integrity and a direct relationship between form and function, on an apparently scientific basis. In this manner, he portrayed the Eclectic approach, preserving a polychronic and decorative ensemble, as a deviation from a natural principle.

Scientific racism and rationalism

In 1863, when the ‘Antiquités américaines’ was published, France was still re-establishing its colonial empire after the fall of Napoleon I (Fig. 3.1).³³¹ As highlighted by Pierre Milza, Napoleon III was heavily invested in revitalising France’s colonial and naval infrastructures as a means of re-affirming French global influence.³³² He set up a new colonial ministry and made the French merchant navy the second largest in the world after Great Britain.³³³ During his reign, he tripled the size of the French Empire, annexing New Caledonia, Cochinchina, and the Marquesas Islands, and establishing protectorates in Cambodia, Tahiti, Tahuata, and the Society Islands.³³⁴ Facilitated by renewed political and military incentives, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a resurgence in global exploration

³³¹ Karen Macknow Lisboa and Amilcar Torrão Filho, ‘French travelers in the Atlantic world in the nineteenth century – in Brazil and in Africa,’ *Transatlantic Cultures*, trans. by Eoin O’Neill, April 2022 <<https://transatlantic-cultures.org/en/catalog/viajantes-franceses-no-mundo-atlantico-do-seculo-xix-no-brasil-e-na-africa>> [Accessed 1 November 2024].

³³² Pierre Milza, *Napoléon III* (Perrin, 2006), pp. 626–636.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

among the French, especially in the Americas, Africa, and South-East Asia.³³⁵ During this period, many French ‘soldiers, missionaries, naturalists, colonial agents, hunters, or adventurers, who studied certain regions with or without support and official funding’ undertook expeditions with a view to surveying hitherto unknown territories and chronicling the animals, plants, peoples, geography, and monuments to be found there.³³⁶ Désiré Charnay was one such individual, and his voyages to Mexico offered Viollet-le-Duc an opportunity to prove his theories on the connection between race and architecture on a new frontier.

At the outset of the essay, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that it was designed to elucidate an area of study which, while having ‘preoccupied, not without reason, the savant world,’ remains largely shrouded in mystery.³³⁷ His primary objective was to ascertain the race to which pre-Colombian builders of the great monuments in the Yucatan peninsula and central Mexico belonged (Fig. 3.2). By ‘examining with attention the architectural

³³⁵ Macknow Lisboa and Torrão Filho.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ « Préoccupé, non sans raison, le monde savant », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Antiquités américaines,’ in *Cités et ruines américaines : Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* by Désiré Charnay (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1863), pp. 3-104, (p. 3).

monuments photographed by M. Charnay,' he hoped to determine whether these populations belonged to the 'pure white races,' those originating from the Orient, or a mixture thereof.³³⁸ As pointed out by Bressani, Viollet-le-Duc's 'racial understanding of the history of architecture' drew from Quatremère de Quincy's position that the three principal types of human dwelling corresponded to three modes of living: 'the tent for nomadic shepherds, the grotto for hunter-gatherers, and the wooden cabin for agrarian peoples'.³³⁹ Viollet-le-Duc attached to this idea Gobineau's polygenist theory 'according to which three separate racial types made up the human race at its origin: white, yellow, and black, all subsequent variations being the product of racial mixtures,' with the intention of making Quatremère de Quincy's theory into 'a scientific (and nationalist) system'.³⁴⁰ Viollet-le-Duc detailed this system regarding the differences of nature between races as follows:

Where blacks are without mixture, there does not exist, properly speaking, a civilisation; there is no progress or decadence: it is a normal barbarous state where material force and cunning alone

³³⁸ « Examinant avec attention les monuments d'architecture photographiés par M. Charnay », « races blanches pures », *Ibid.*, (p. 4).

³³⁹ Bressani, pp. 352-353.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

govern; where the Turanid or Finnic race has stayed pure, if the mores are less rude, if one finds the appearance of a moral authority, there are nonetheless no sensible variations and advances in the social state. [...] The white element alone gives life to these inert and obscure masses; it brings its cosmogony, the observation of the times, its passion for renown, its incessant need for activity.³⁴¹

Building on what Gobineau and Quatremère de Quincy asserted, however, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that these innate racial qualities factored directly into a given race's architecture, and that was is possible to say that 'such monument belongs to such race, because the methods employed to

³⁴¹ « Là où le noir est sans mélange, il n'existe pas, à proprement parler, une civilisation ; il n'y a ni progrès ni décadence : c'est un état normal barbare où la force matérielle et la ruse gouvernent seules ; là où la race touranienne ou finnique est restée pure, si les mœurs sont moins grossières, si l'on trouve une apparence d'autorité morale, il n'y a point cependant de progrès et de variations sensibles dans l'état social. [...] L'élément blanc seul donne la vie à ces masses inertes et obscures ; il apporte sa cosmogonie, l'observation des temps, sa passion pour la renommée, son besoin incessant d'activité », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Antiquités américaines,' (p. 90).

raise it' have been practiced by such race alone.³⁴² This principle he extended to racial mixtures, which, while more difficult to elucidate, may nevertheless be attributed to a specific construction system.³⁴³

In this regard, Viollet-le-Duc laid out his observations as to the specific methods and materials of construction used by each race and racial combination. For instance, when mortar appears in a construction, 'one can assure that the men who made it have Turanid or Finnic blood in their veins,' yet it is given to the Semitic Aryans and pure Semites 'to build in drystone' without mortar.³⁴⁴ As for pure Aryans, their constructions invariably constitute 'constructions of carpentry' or at least indicate a prior tradition thereof; a phenomenon which can be seen in the oldest monuments of India, as in those of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Ionians.³⁴⁵ Where there is a mixture of Aryan and black peoples, there can be found 'large-scale constructions without the aid of cement or mortar, monoliths,' in which 'only the simplest laws of static are allowed'; the signs

³⁴² « Tel monument appartient à telle race, parce que les méthodes employées pour l'élever », Ibid., (pp. 5-6).

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ « On peut assurer que les hommes qui l'ont faite ont du sang touranien ou finnois dans leur veines », « bâtir en pierre sèche », Ibid., (p. 27).

³⁴⁵ « Constructions de charpenterie », Ibid., (pp. 27-28).

of this principle are best evidenced in Egypt, though also in Ionia and Hellas (central and Southern Greece).³⁴⁶ If one encounters in a monument, however, ‘traces of mortar, blockages, stones stuck together by a paste, one can be assured that Turanid or Finnic blood was mixed with Aryan blood.’³⁴⁷ Using this system of the architectural predispositions relating to each race, notwithstanding certain contemporary texts dealing with the history, myths, and legends of pre-Columbian North and central America, and most importantly, photographs of ‘all the debris found, from the most ordinary utensils to the greatest monuments of the Yucatan and of lower Mexico,’

³⁴⁶ « les constructions en grand appareil sans l’aide du ciment ou du mortier, les monolithes », « les lois les plus simples de la statique sont seules admises », Ibid., (p. 83).

³⁴⁷ « Des traces de mortier, de blocages, de pierres agglutinées par une pâte, on peut être assuré que le sang touranien ou finnois s’est mêlé au sang aryan », Ibid. According to a now-outdated belief, the Turanid race was thought to be subset of the Caucasian [white] race which originated from central Asia, and which had a certain Mongolian [yellow] admixture. Ibid., (p. 4, 31).

Viollet-le-Duc claimed to be able to uncover, or rather reconstruct, certain core aspects of the people who created these works (Figs. 3.3 and 3.4).³⁴⁸

Regarding race, Viollet-le-Duc argued that in addition to the commonly accepted hypothesis that the native American populations had originated from Eurasia via the Behring land bridge, there was another group which had migrated down the east coast of the American continent from Greenland.³⁴⁹ He claimed that the populations migrating from the West were Turanid or Malay, and that those from the East belonged to the ‘Scandinavian or Indo-Germanic races,’ with the two racial populations converging at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.³⁵⁰ He asserted that the yellow races arrived first but were subjugated by the invading Aryans; the latter were forced into ‘lending their arms to the edification of these vast constructions under the domination of their new masters,’ recalling Gobineau’s argument about how white races invariably established themselves as the noble or ruling classes in great

³⁴⁸ « Tous les débris trouvés, depuis les ustensiles les plus ordinaires jusqu’aux grands monuments de l’Yucatan et du bas Mexique », *Ibid.*, (p. 15).

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, (p. 7).

³⁵⁰ « Races scandinaves ou indo-germaniques », *Ibid.*

civilisations.³⁵¹ Thus, according to Viollet-le-Duc, the monuments of the pre-Colombian Yucatan peninsula and central Mexico were in fact raised by ‘peoples formed of a mixture of white races having come from the north-east and of yellow races being aboriginal or having come from the north-west’.³⁵² In making this argument, he seemed to have proven a direct relationship between race and architecture, that it was possible to identify one by a consideration of the other.

However, as highlighted in Lyon Sprague de Camp’s (1907-2000) *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme*, works such as John Lloyd Stephens’ (1805-1852) *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán* and *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán*, published in 1841 and 1843 respectively, in addition to Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg’s (1814-1874) *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l’Amérique-Centrale, durant les siècles antérieurs à Christophe Colomb, écrite sur des documents originaux et entièrement inédits, puisés aux anciennes archives des indigènes*, published between 1857 and 1859, aided in dismantling contemporary theories ‘about an Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman,

³⁵¹ « Prêtant leurs bras à l’édification de ces vastes constructions sous la domination de leurs nouveaux maîtres », Ibid., (pp. 31-32).

³⁵² « Des peuplades formées d’un mélange de races de races blanches venues du nord-est et de races jaunes aborigènes ou venues du nord-ouest », Ibid.

Norse, Chinese, or other Old-World origin for the Amerindian civilizations'.³⁵³ Also, while Viollet-le-Duc relied on Brasseur de Bourbourg's *Popol Vuh : Le livre sacré et les mythes de l'antiquité américaine avec les livres héroïques et historiques des Quichés*, published in 1861, he did not once mention his *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale* which was published before, as already mentioned. In the latter, Bourbourg asserted that existing evidence at the time rejected the likelihood that European explorers and settlers had intermingled with native American populations and contributed to the development, especially architectural and agricultural, of the ancient Yucatecs and central Mexicans.³⁵⁴

This underlines how Viollet-le-Duc was less concerned with following the scholarly consensus on the matter and more intent on demonstrating his own theory about the relation between race and architecture, notwithstanding Gobineau's pseudoscientific idea that the white race, 'as weak as it may be numerically,' leaves its mark permanently upon the earth

³⁵³ Lyon Sprague de Camp, *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme* (Ballantine Books, 1975), p. 109.

³⁵⁴ Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale, durant les siècles antérieurs à Christophe Colomb, écrite sur des documents originaux et entièrement inédits, puisés aux anciennes archives des indigènes*, 4 vols (Arthus Bertrand, 1857), I, pp. 1-31.

and alone ‘possesses this privilege of inaugurating civilisations’.³⁵⁵ Indeed, the notion that the great monuments of the Yucatan peninsula and central Mexico were not built by a white or white hybrid race threatened to undermine the notion of the white race’s monopoly on civilisation, and with it, much of the framework which underpinned nineteenth-century colonial and imperial ideologies. As detailed in ‘AAPA Statement on Race and Racism,’ ‘the Western concept of race must be understood as a classification system that emerged from, and in support of, European colonialism, oppression, and discrimination’.³⁵⁶ At the very least, an alternative hypothesis to the one Viollet-le-Duc proposed would have forced him to reformulate his conception of the dialogue between race and architecture, and by extension, much of his rationalist ideology; in effect, race was the conduit which allowed for the universal application of his rationalist theory of architecture.

However, it was not just blood or race which could supposedly be deduced from an analysis of a nation’s visual heritage. Viollet-le-Duc also

³⁵⁵ « Si faible qu’elle soit numériquement », « possède ce privilège d’inaugurer les civilisations », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Antiquités américaines,’ (p. 89).

³⁵⁶ Agustín Fuentes and others, ‘AAPA Statement on Race and Racism,’ *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 169.3 (2019), pp. 400-402.

claimed to discern the religious beliefs and practices, burial rites, agricultural development, migration routes, socio-political structure, and even the precursory architectural traditions which must have led to the monuments whose ruins now dot the Yucatan peninsula and central Mexico.³⁵⁷ With the exception of his account of migration routes, his appreciations in these respects were much closer to contemporary understanding, yet the essay was always more about buttressing his theory of architectural rationality than it ever was about ascertaining the character of the ancient Yucatecs and central Mexicans. By arguing that it was possible to demystify an ancient civilisation by considering its architecture and other forms of material culture, he suggested that rationality was a principle to which all architectural traditions were bound, at least with regard to their origin and initial development. This notion provided that architecture was never the product of chance or whim, that it was invariably shaped into existence by satisfying a population's needs, tastes, and idiosyncrasies using the materials and construction methods available to them, and which corresponded to the climate of their native soil. Moreover, Viollet-le-Duc's claims in the '*Antiquités américaines*' served to undermine the idea expressed by Quatremère de Quincy that the Gothic could not be reconstructed since it lacked a discernible system of proportions, by

³⁵⁷ Viollet-le-Duc, '*Antiquités américaines*,' (pp. 15-45).

intimating that an appreciation of the elements which necessarily factored into the development of a construction system could reveal the nature of the construction system itself. In this manner, unknowns could theoretically be solved and missing parts filled in; even a monument in the worst stages of dilapidation could be restored to its original form by considering the race of those who built it, their customs, political structure, or indeed the climate and materials native to their country.

Georges Cuvier and the anatomy of architecture

In outlining his intentions for the 'Antiquités américaines,' Viollet-le-Duc mentioned that in 1829, naturalist and zoologist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) claimed that it was impossible 'to offer an opinion on the ethnic nature of the indigenous nations of America' with the present state of the natural sciences as they were.³⁵⁸ As has been shown, however, Viollet-le-Duc was confident that he could determine the race of these populations through an analysis of their architecture and other forms of visual culture; an exercise which, it could be argued, was meant to demonstrate the veracity of his rationalist theory of architecture. As pointed out by scholars such as Damisch, Boudon, Deshayes, and Aron Vinegar, Viollet-le-Duc

³⁵⁸ « Émettre une opinion sur la nature ethnique des nations indigènes de l'Amérique », Ibid., (p. 6).

made use of Cuvier's innovations in comparative anatomy to give credence to his theories about the origin and development of construction systems.³⁵⁹ Vinegar explains that in Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, he presents dissected drawings of Gothic architecture to show 'an internal structure and order equivalent to any living organism'.³⁶⁰ In doing so, he 'filters the viewer's conception of Gothic architecture' through a method of representation appropriated from the science of anatomy and convinces the reader that the Gothic 'is a completely scientific and rational' system of construction.³⁶¹ According to Cuvier, all organisms constituted 'integrated wholes, in which each part's form and function were integrated into the entire body. No part could be modified without impairing this functional integration,' a notion which mirrors almost exactly what Viollet-le-Duc wrote in the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* about how the compartmentalisation of the Gothic, with the form of each member being determined by a

³⁵⁹ Damisch, p. 19; Boudon and Deshayes, p. 351; Aron Vinegar, 'Memory as Construction in Viollet-le-Duc's Architectural Imagination,' *Paroles gelées*, 16.2 (1998), pp. 43-55 (p. 43).

³⁶⁰ Ibid., (p. 45).

³⁶¹ Ibid.

functional relation to the whole, would always result in discord.³⁶² This notion juxtaposed his purist approach to restoration against the Eclectic one, according to which Gothic edifices were preserved with non-Gothic elements among them.

Furthermore, Cuvier claimed that ‘each part of an organism, no matter how small, bore signs of the whole. Thus, it was possible to reconstruct organisms from fragmentary remains, based on rational principles’ (Fig. 3.5).³⁶³ Indeed, Viollet-le-Duc himself wrote in the dictionary entry ‘style,’ that in the same way that a leaf allows one to determine the nature of a plant, or a bone an animal, ‘in seeing a profile, one can deduce the members of architecture; from the member of architecture, the monument’.³⁶⁴ As seen in the previous sub-chapter, Viollet-le-Duc intimated that rationalism alone could offer a fairly accurate approximation of a population’s defining characteristics by an analysis of its architecture, in much the same way that an animal’s skeleton allowed for an

³⁶² ‘Georges Cuvier (1769-1832),’ University of California Museum of Paleontology, n.d. <<https://ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/cuvier.html>> [Accessed 1 November 2024].

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ « En voyant un profil, on en déduit les membres d’architecture ; le membre d’architecture, le monument », Damisch, p. 19.

appreciation of its behaviours or diet for example. It followed from that principle that the general disposition of an architecture could be discerned from the characteristics of the population whose functions it served.

Damisch maintained that Viollet-le-Duc's use of Cuvier's ideas was meant to lend an 'imperious rationalism' to his ideas about the Gothic, and more importantly, 'to strike minds and to persuade them of the merits of a method that aimed to restore—at least ideally—disappeared buildings from fragments, vestiges, *traces* at our disposal'.³⁶⁵ Here Damisch underlined how Viollet-le-Duc's quest to support his rationalist theory of architecture was meant to compliment his approach to restoration in the face of opposition from mainstream restorers who favoured the Eclectic approach. This notion is further supported by Vinegar, who draws an interesting parallel between Viollet-le-Duc's process of lending realism to the mythical griffin, and that of scientifically grounding Gothic architecture, 'which was previously maligned or romanticised as incoherent or mystical'.³⁶⁶ According to Vinegar, just as Viollet-le-Duc presented cross-sections of

³⁶⁵ « Rationalisme impérieux », « frapper les esprits et à les persuader du bien-fondé d'une méthode qui visait restituer — au moins idéalement — les édifices disparus à partir des fragments, des vestiges, des *traces* dont nous disposons », Damisch, p. 19.

³⁶⁶ Vinegar, (p. 45).

Gothic buildings to lend to them an anatomical essence, he rendered the griffins featured at Pierrefonds castle, which he restored between 1857 and 1879, with a visible bone structure and musculature to make them appear as feasibly real animals, and eschew pejorative associations of the Gothic being the fruit of caprice instead of reason.³⁶⁷

It is also interesting to note that there existed a parallel between Viollet-le-Duc's struggle with the Eclecticists, and Cuvier's disagreement with fellow zoologist Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), each adopting a contrasting perspective on evolutionary biology.³⁶⁸ As summarised by Bressani, Cuvier staunchly defended 'the invariability of species, conceiving all animal forms as having been created once and for all by God to live in a given set of conditions,' while de Saint-Hilaire 'sought to identify a basic structural analogy between all organisms that formed the basis of a principle of transformation'.³⁶⁹ This disagreement mirrored the difference between Viollet-le-Duc's belief that the Gothic was a static, intransigent, and isolated construction system, and the Eclecticists' view that it was part of a continuous transition of architectural form without concrete beginnings or endings of style. In fact, as pointed out in Van Zanten's *Designing Paris: The*

³⁶⁷ Ibid., (p. 43).

³⁶⁸ 'Georges Cuvier (1769-1832)'.

³⁶⁹ Bressani, p, 279.

Architecture of Duban, Labrousse, Duc, and Vaudoyer from 1987, Viollet-le-Duc's Eclecticist co-inspector general of diocesan monuments, Léonce Reynaud, adopted Saint-Hilaire's idea 'that function inflects organic structure—that it is an active force manifesting itself in many ways and degrees—but that a "unité de plan" survives everywhere underneath,' and incorporated it into his *Traité d'architecture*, published between 1850 and 1858.³⁷⁰ The text 'became the principal architectural treatise of mid-century France' and was pivotal to the Eclecticists' conception of architectural styles as inflections of an arcuated medieval Christian construction system.³⁷¹

While the 'Antiquités américaines' did not touch upon Gothic architecture per se, Viollet-le-Duc's portrayal of the direct and causational relationship between race, mores, beliefs, socio-political structure, and construction systems served to support his rational theory of architecture in a way that he had not done so concretely before. The essay also intimated that rationality was not just a quality unique to certain architectural traditions, but to all, in the same way that the principles identified by Cuvier were applied by him to all organisms. Viollet-le-Duc consciously made this comparison to lend a scientific dimension to his ideas in the hope of prevailing upon his contemporaries of the possibility, let alone the worth

³⁷⁰ Van Zanten, p. 57.

³⁷¹ Ibid., p. 47.

of reconstructing Gothic monuments according to their natural, rational state; as opposed to one of chimeric, polychronic Eclecticism. In a way, he presented the Gothic as an organism with an anatomical structure, and that as such, it would be just as wrong to preserve Eclectic Gothic hybrids as it would be to erect a dinosaur's skeleton which had been pieced together using different animal bones from different times; it would constitute an equally flagrant disregard for the principles of science.

Chapter 4: The *Entretiens sur l'architecture*

Viollet-le-Duc published the *Entretiens sur l'architecture* in two volumes between 1863 and 1872. These texts extolled the Gothic in much the same way as his previous works, yet departed from them in that they made his position regarding the French nation's superiority to others in Europe explicit, both in the Middle-Ages and the nineteenth century. Prior to the *Entretiens*, he had asserted the distinction of the French, but only intimated their superiority, especially with respect to their neighbours. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the *Entretiens* juxtaposed the sobriety and rationality of the Gothic against the excess and capriciousness of medieval and Renaissance Italian architecture in particular; styles which influenced the fashionable Beaux-Arts and consequently the Napoleon III or Second Empire Style.³⁷² Viollet-le-Duc's critique of Italianate architecture, which Boudon and Deshayes equated with overt nationalism in their analysis of his *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, was significant because it addressed a general trend toward Eclecticism, which filtered equally into artistic education and the practice of restoration in nineteenth-century France.

³⁷² Garric, p. 6; Robert Ducher, *Caractéristique des styles* (Flammarion, 1988), 178-197.

The battle against Eclecticism

The publication of the *Entretiens* came at a time when Viollet-le-Duc's battle against the Beaux-Arts was at its most heated. In 1862, he published a series of three articles for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts: Courrier Européen de l'Art et de la Curiosité* entitled 'L'Enseignement des Arts. — Il y a quelque chose à faire,' in which he aired his grievances with the current state of education at the École des Beaux-Arts.³⁷³ As related in a contemporary article in *The Builder*, 'Architectural Education' he was particularly frustrated that since many professors at the École 'and some of the members of the [Académie] had private studios of their own, their feeling naturally prompted them to be indulgent to their own pupils when awarding the prizes. A considerable abuse, therefore, had crept into the school, causing at the time great disturbance.'³⁷⁴ Additionally, Viollet-le-Duc believed architectural graduates from the École were barely capable of designing buildings which catered to the needs and usages, let alone possibilities of the day; they were not equipped with 'an understanding, superficial even, of the materials at our disposal and of their employment' nor did they learn 'about the diverse

³⁷³ Viollet-le-Duc, 'L'Enseignement des Arts. — Il y a quelque chose à faire (*premier article*)'.

³⁷⁴ [Anon.], 'The Architectural Association: Art Education,' *The Building News and Engineering Journal*, 14 (1867), pp. 753-755 (p. 754).

modes of construction adopted in all known eras' or receive 'the faintest smattering of the administration and conduct of works'.³⁷⁵ He also stressed in these articles that it made little sense for the winners of the École's most prestigious competition, the Prix de Rome, to be sent off to Italy, when there was no shortage of masterpieces and experts in antiquities at their disposal in France; 'if in 1819 our museums were badly classed and contained many apocryphal monuments, they are today placed under the direction of enlightened, savant men.'³⁷⁶ Amid the debate, Viollet-le-Duc and a small cabal of Beaux-Arts opponents 'obtained the ear of the Government; and in consequence a decree was published in November, 1863, changing the constitution of the school,' and making Viollet-le-Duc professor of the

³⁷⁵ « Une connaissance, même superficielle, des matériaux mis à notre disposition et de leur emploi », « des divers modes de bâtir adoptés à toutes les époques connues », « la moindre teinture de l'administration et de la conduit des travaux », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'L'Enseignement des Arts. — Il y a quelque chose à faire (*troisième article*)', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1st ser., 13.1 (1862), pp. 71-82 (p. 72).

³⁷⁶ « Si en 1819 nos musées étaient mal classes et contenaient beaucoup de monuments apocryphes, ils sont aujourd'hui places sous la direction d'hommes éclairés, savants », Viollet-le-Duc, 'L'Enseignement des Arts. — Il y a quelque chose à faire (*premier article*)', (p. 398).

history of art and aesthetics in the process.³⁷⁷ Despite the admiration which many students at the École had for Viollet-le-Duc and his publications:

The pill he wanted them to swallow was much too large to be taken at one time; consequently, after three ineffectual attempts to make himself heard in the lecture-room, he retired in disgust, and the Government allowed the school to relapse into nearly its former state, without, however, stultifying itself, by withdrawing the decree.³⁷⁸

In the notice to the readers of the *Entretiens*, Viollet-le-Duc intimated that his sour reception at the École owed to Beulé, perpetual secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, for whom Viollet-le-Duc's teachings would be nothing more than 'an exposé of exclusive doctrines, and baneful by consequence'.³⁷⁹ The prospect of a struggle for which he had neither the time nor interest initially prompted Viollet-le-Duc to shelve his lectures indefinitely. However, his good opinion of those who had first urged him to

³⁷⁷ [Anon.], 'The Architectural Association; Art Education,' pp. 753-755 (p. 754).

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ « Un exposé de doctrines exclusives, et funestes par conséquent », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Simples aveux aux lecteurs,' in *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, 2 vols (Vve A. Morel, 1863), i, pp. 3-7 (pp. 3-4).

teach, his admiration for those who, despite ‘not practicing or having ever practiced architecture, are willing to take the trouble to teach it to us from the pulpit or in their writings,’ and his disdain of the silence maintained by great artistic authorities, ultimately moved him to publish the lectures.³⁸⁰ He claimed that they were written for his friends, colleagues, students, and provincial and foreign correspondents, however his allusion to the anticipated hostility from all the schools to which he did not belong indicated an awareness of a much wider readership.³⁸¹ Bressani describes the *Entretiens* as ‘a broad historical reflection, recasting the Gothic within a general theory of architectural evolution’ with the first volume defining ‘the nature of historical progress,’ and the second presenting ‘the consequence of that evolution for the present.’³⁸² It should be added, however, that Viollet-le-Duc made clear his intention ‘to accustom the studious youth to a respect for the efforts of [their] predecessors, to teach them to judge, not on prejudices, but after thoughtful examination, to propagate the spirit of

³⁸⁰ « Ne pratiquant et n’ayant jamais pratiqué l’architecture veulent bien prendre la peine de nous l’enseigner en chaire ou dans leur écrits », Ibid., (p. 5).

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Bressani, p. 333.

method among artists'.³⁸³ Of particular interest, his sixth lecture: 'Sur les temps de décadence de l'architecture antique; sur le style et la composition; sur les origines de l'architecture byzantine; sur l'architecture occidentale depuis le Christianisme,' features a nationalistic perspective account of the history of French architecture, one with which this chapter is chiefly concerned.

Despite the opposition of the Académie to this sort of idea, as evidenced by their efforts to prevent him from teaching them in person, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that there was in fact much popular support for the revitalisation of national architecture; 'the reaction is ready; we have the elements, because, for twenty-five or thirty years, our artisans, our workers have eagerly accepted all attempts to rehabilitate our national arts'.³⁸⁴ Just as

³⁸³ « D'habituer la jeunesse studieuse au respect pour les efforts de nos devanciers, de lui apprendre à juger, non sur des préventions, mais après un examen réfléchi, de propager l'esprit de méthode parmi les artistes », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Simples aveux aux lecteurs,' (p. 6).

³⁸⁴ « La réaction est prête ; nous en possédons les éléments, car, depuis vingt-cinq ou trente ans, nos artisans, nos ouvriers acceptant avec empressement toutes les tentatives de réhabilitation de nos arts nationaux », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' in *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, pp. 173-248, (p. 247).

he claimed that in the sixteenth century, artisans had begrudgingly bent to the whims of their royal and noble patrons, the labourers of imperial France were poised to cast aside the Greek and Roman arts, to return to their national architecture. According to Viollet-le-Duc, the contemporary movement mirrored that of the French in the thirteenth century, who, surging from the bottom of the societal pyramid, sought to create an art which emancipated them, which represented them and their national spirit.³⁸⁵ This same spirit, he claimed, ‘is awakening little by little, because among us the lowest of workers reasons, wants to understand what he is doing, and he attaches himself with passion to works whose order and details have a logical sense to him’.³⁸⁶ Here he argued that, contrary to what certain adherents of the Beaux-Arts might have insinuated or even claimed, he was not alone in championing the cause for national or Gothic architecture, or in sensing that the time had come for it to be revitalised; for the French people to reclaim that ancient art, born with the advent of the nation itself, and with the emancipation of the third estate.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ « Se réveille peu à peu, car chez nous le dernier des ouvriers raisonne, veut comprendre ce qu’il fait, et il s’attache avec passion aux ouvrages dont l’ordonnance comme les détails ont un sens logique pour lui », Ibid., (p. 248).

It was also during this time that Baron Hausmann, named Prefect of the Seine in 1853, was entrusted by Napoleon III 'to aerate, unify, and embellish' the city of Paris, which he did until the Franco-Prussian war in 1871.³⁸⁷ The style in vogue at the time was alternatively named the Napoleon III or Second Empire style, which itself was an offshoot of the Eclectic Italianate Beaux-Arts style.³⁸⁸ In *Charles Garnier's Paris Opéra: Architectural Empathy and the Renaissance of French Classicism*, published in 1991, Christopher Mead relates a conversation which reputedly took place between the empress Eugenie and Charles Garnier (1825-1898) in 1861, eponymous architect of the Second Empire style, regarding his design for the new Paris Opera; 'She burst out, "What style is that? It is not Greek, not Louis XVI, not even Louis XV!" Garnier's cool response was that, indeed, it was "du Napoléon III," and that she should not complain, for those other styles had had their day'.³⁸⁹ It is easy to see how 'the imitation of old styles, the taste for pomp and comfort, and the decorative redundancy' characterising ornamentation under the Second Empire were seen by

³⁸⁷ « Aérer, unifier, et embellir », Patrice de Moncan, *Le Paris d'Hausmann* (Les Éditions du Mécène, 2009), p. 33.

³⁸⁸ Poisson and Poisson, p. 19.

³⁸⁹ Christopher Mead, *Charles Garnier's Paris Opéra: Architectural Empathy and the Renaissance of French Classicism* (MIT Press, 1991), p. 269.

Viollet-le-Duc as threats to France's architectural future, and his treatment of its architectural past.³⁹⁰ Indeed, the publication of the *Entretiens* seems to have been an attempt by Viollet-le-Duc to raise awareness of the practical dangers resulting from the Eclecticisation and Italianisation of the national arts, which will be explored in this chapter.

While he had remarked in the dictionaries that the French race or nation was distinct from others in Europe, in the Middle Ages as in the nineteenth century, it was in the *Entretiens* that he first accentuated their superiority; likely as an urgent response to the accelerating contemporary fascination in France with the Italian arts, especially architecture. According to Viollet-le-Duc, the French form 'the nation which best sums up the idea of a civilisation produced by the unity of feelings, by the affinity of races fused into a single thought'.³⁹¹ In fact, he claimed that France was the first European nation and was the only country in the Middle Ages which saw an attempt to form a 'nation body, moved by the same feeling towards

³⁹⁰ « L'imitation des styles anciens, le goût de l'apparat et du confort, la redondance décorative », Robert Ducher, p. 188.

³⁹¹ « La nation résumant le mieux l'idée d'une civilisation produite par l'unité des sentiments, par l'affinité de races fondues en une seule pensée », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 205).

intellectual unity, by the same faith in the future'.³⁹² Everywhere else, there were 'cities, merchant associations, more or less complete political constitutions, brilliant individuals,' but not the precursor to a nation as in France.³⁹³ It is important to note that the mid-nineteenth century, especially the period between 1848 and 1849, or the springtime of nations as it is known, was characterised by myriad revolutions across Europe, many of which did away with long-established monarchical regimes, and crystallised or catalysed nationalist movements; such as in the Austrian Empire, Denmark, the German States, the Italian States, Poland, and Hungary, among others.³⁹⁴ The implication of France being the oldest nation, in a time when so many others were defining and asserting themselves, implies that it was pre-eminent, more established, of a sort of pedigree that placed it above the rest. Moreover, by claiming that it was especially in France 'that the Christian idea applied to the arts developed with the least hesitation' in

³⁹² « Corps de nation, mus par un même sentiment vers l'unité intellectuelle, par un même foie en l'avenir », Ibid., (p. 207).

³⁹³ « Des villes, des associations de marchands, des constitutions politiques plus ou moins complètes, des individualités brillantes », Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Priscilla Smith Robertson, *The Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* (Princeton University Press, 1952); John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*, 2 vols (W. W. Norton, 1996), ii, p. 715.

the Middle Ages, Viollet-le-Duc intimated that the French were more Christian than their neighbours, something which he had first suggested all the way back in the 1840s in the *Annales*, and which added a spiritual dimension to the nation's supposed superiority.³⁹⁵

In the *Entretiens*, more so than in any of his prior works, the situation of the day prompted Viollet-le-Duc to underscore the differences between the evolution of Italian and French arts, and to insist on the supremacy of the latter. One of the ways in which he did so was by claiming that in France, 'individualities did not take long to disappear in this movement of minds; architecture managed to constitute itself at the state of science' in the Middle Ages.³⁹⁶ With the Italian arts, however, where there was not so pronounced a sense of nationality or even of political unity, there was 'a great indecision' with an Eclectic assortment of styles and influences at play; Viollet-le-Duc even argued that in the beginning of the fifteenth century,

³⁹⁵ « Que l'idée chrétienne appliquée aux arts se développe avec le moins d'hésitation », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 207).

³⁹⁶ « Les individualités ne tardent pas à disparaître dans ce mouvement des esprits ; l'architecture arrive à se constituer à l'état de science », Ibid., (p. 239).

Italy may have possessed architects, but not an architecture of its own.³⁹⁷ It should also be remarked that the first volume of the *Entretiens* was published around two years after the foundation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, after centuries of failed attempts at national unification, and only succeeding after external intervention, from Napoleon III no less.³⁹⁸ It could be said that Viollet-le-Duc directly juxtaposed the precarious new-found nationhood of the Italians against that of the French, who had developed a nation hundreds of years prior and in a more natural and popular process, as a means of undermining the hold which the Italian arts held over much of Europe and indeed the world.

It is probable that Viollet-le-Duc's opposition to the use of Italian arts in France owed to the fact that ever since the Renaissance, the French, or rather the first estate, had looked to Rome for an example to follow, and had 'mutilated, changed, demolished, meddled, and restored in a thousand fashions' the true national architecture in the process.³⁹⁹ A testament of this Italophile phenomenon was the École des Beaux-Arts' Prix de Rome, its most prestigious competition, and perhaps the most prestigious in

³⁹⁷ « Une grande indécision », Ibid., (p. 240).

³⁹⁸ Carlo Bossoli, *The War in Italy* (Day & Son, 1859).

³⁹⁹ « Mutilés, changes, démolis, mêlés, et restaurées de mille façons », Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (p. 304).

France.⁴⁰⁰ The competition was inaugurated during the reign of the Italophile Louis XIV and offered the chance for artists in various categories to win a paid sojourn at the Villa Medici in Rome, where they would study the great Italian masterpieces in order to complete their education as accomplished artists before returning to the fatherland.⁴⁰¹ Thus, his comparison between Italian and French arts in the *Entretiens* not only constituted an attack on Eclecticism, but also an attempt to reorient French artistic focus away from Italy and towards itself, where it should always have been, to his mind.

He acknowledged the brilliance of Italian medieval individualities, but emphasised that they were just that, individualities, therefore ‘the study of the art of architecture in the Middle Ages in Italy can only produce biographies, not a history, nor consequently an education’.⁴⁰² He even extended his argument about Italy’s lack of national history and architecture to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, quipping that the term ‘Italian Renaissance’ referred rather to ‘the Renaissance of Brunelleschi, to that of

⁴⁰⁰ Bressani, p. 50.

⁴⁰¹ Poisson and Poisson, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁰² « L’étude de l’art de l’architecture au moyen âge en Italie ne peut-elle produire que des biographies, non une histoire, ni par conséquent un enseignement », Viollet-le-Duc, ‘Sixième entretien,’ (p. 241).

Michelozzo, of L. Batista Alberti, Bramante, Peruzzi, and Sansovino'.⁴⁰³

Regardless of whatever merit the works of these masters had, Viollet-le-Duc maintained that they 'hardly had between them these relationships, this filiation that we like to find in the artistic productions of a country; relationships which were so striking among [the French], from the Garonne to the Channel, during the course of the sixteenth century'.⁴⁰⁴ This idea about French artistic unity, however, seems more to have served Viollet-le-Duc's rational hypothesis and radical restorations, than an accurate historical narrative, as exemplified by certain critics' qualms with his treatment of the Gothic as a single, unified style emanating from the Île-de-France. According to Saint-Paul, the restoration of the basilica of Saint-Sernin de Toulouse in the early 1860s exemplified the 'lack of care Viollet-le-Duc took to conform to the requirements and habits of the local aesthetic, especially when it came to Midi,' underlining that French

⁴⁰³ « Renaissance italienne », « la Renaissance de Brunelleschi de celle de Michelozzo, de L. Batista Alberti, de Bramante, de Balthazar Peruzzi, de Sansovino », Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ « N'ont point entre elles ces rapports, cette filiation que l'on aime à trouver dans les productions d'art d'un pays ; rapports qui sont si frappants chez nous, de la Garonne à la Manche, pendant le cours du seizième siècle », Ibid.

architecture did in fact exhibit a regional Eclecticism which Viollet-le-Duc had not accounted for.⁴⁰⁵ This notion is further supported by Saint-Paul's comments on Roquetaillade castle (Fig. 4.1) in Southwest France, which Viollet-le-Duc restored for a M. de Mauvezin between 1864 and 1875. Saint-Paul related that 'following the habitual tendency of Viollet-le-Duc, it is the memories and traditions of the north that have been evoked. Thus the crenelations have been prettified with pinnacles, which are only rarely found at Montbard and at Coucy'; he did not know how, or wish to conform his conception of the Gothic to 'the aesthetic of the banks of the Garonne' which flows from the Spanish Pyrenees to the Gironde Estuary at Bordeaux.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, Saint-Paul cited a comment made in *Le Courrier de la Gironde*, which summed up his, and the locals' impressions of the castle; 'the restoration of Roquetaillade is a work where the love of beauty trumps the love of truth and of history; it satisfies rather the eye than

⁴⁰⁵ « Peu de soin que mettait Viollet-le-Duc à se conformer aux exigences et aux habitudes de l'esthétique locale, surtout quand il s'agissait du Midi », Saint-Paul, p. 48.

⁴⁰⁶ « Suivant la tendance habituelle de Viollet-le-Duc, ce sont les souvenirs et les traditions du Nord qui ont été évoqués. Ainsi les créneaux ont été enjolivés de clochetons, qu'on ne trouve guère qu'à Montbard et à Coucy », « l'esthétique des bords de la Garonne », Ibid., pp. 51-52.

science. Nothing is as beautiful as the truth, and Roquetaillade is but a bastard revision of our regional architecture from the fourteenth century.⁴⁰⁷ This is a prime example of how the nationalist narratives Viollet-le-Duc presented in his works served to support restoration practices which not only went against mainstream ideas, but also tended to outrage those in whose localities his projects were being undertaken. Saint-Paul's observations accentuate the subjectivity of Viollet-le-Duc's rationalist stance that the formal character of the Gothic, a single national architecture, corresponded to the functional needs of a single nation, as unified by beliefs, habits, and race, as by socio-political structure and physical environment.

Viollet-le-Duc also used the idea of the Italian tendency toward individual, rather than national genius, to support the claim that the medieval Italians, 'not having been able to form an art, any more than they had known how to form a nation, naturally had to return to the imitation of

⁴⁰⁷ « La restauration de Roquetaillade est une œuvre où l'amour du beau prime l'amour du vrai et de l'histoire ; elle satisfait plutôt le regard que la science. Rien n'est beau comme le vrai, et Roquetaillade n'est plus qu'un remaniement bâtard de notre architecture régionale du quatorzième siècle », Ibid., p. 52.

Roman arts,' implying that Classical architecture had been resorted to as a means of establishing a sort of pseudo-national character.⁴⁰⁸ This statement suggested in turn that the adoption of Classical architecture as a national construction system demonstrated a non-existent or weak national identity and unity, not just in the Italian States, but as a rule. The characterisation of the Italians as lacking in creativity was a direct contrast against the French, who, as Viollet-le-Duc claimed in the dictionaries, were able to coalesce politically and artistically as early as the twelfth century and give rise to a native architecture, possessed of power and originality, being completely independent, or enfranchised, from anterior traditions.⁴⁰⁹

The endurance of French national architecture

Viollet-le-Duc also used the *Entretiens* as an opportunity to reassert the rationality of French architecture, something which, as has been considered, was ubiquitous in his publications. Moreover, he reiterated his position regarding the structurality of the Gothic, stressing that it was not 'the result of a series of fumbles' but rather 'the effect of a *successful* study of the diverse

⁴⁰⁸ « N'ayant pu former un art, pas plus qu'ils n'avaient su former une nation, devaient revenir naturellement à l'imitation des arts romains », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 241).

⁴⁰⁹ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture,' pp. 116-166.

parts, relative to the whole,' which alone determines 'if a work is good' (Fig. 4.3).⁴¹⁰ In contrast to his characterisation of Gothic or French national architecture, he maintained that there was in Italian architecture 'no relation between structure and decoration,' nor an understanding of the subdivision of architectural bones, as it were.⁴¹¹ That said, the notion of function was perceived very differently by most proponents of Classical styles, and indeed the Eclecticists, who maintained that 'mere construction is aesthetically mute and that expression comes through a decorative veil of the Greek Orders laid over the functional surfaces'.⁴¹² According to Damisch, one of the primary reasons for which Viollet-le-Duc was opposed to the Beaux-Arts was because it 'stopped at the appearance of edifices, at their superficial envelope, and that it was satisfied with enunciating the rules of ordinance, those of monumental composition, all in ignoring everything

⁴¹⁰ « Le résultat d'une suite de tâtonnements », « l'effet d'une étude *réussie* des diverses parties, relativement à l'ensemble », « si une œuvre est bonne », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Neuvième entretien,' in *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, pp. 385-448 (p. 407).

⁴¹¹ « Nul rapport entre la structure et la décoration », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 240).

⁴¹² Van Zanten, p. 48.

about the *real* logic on which the art of building is based'.⁴¹³ In addition to accusing Italian architecture of lacking the form-function relationship which is the mark of rational construction, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that it was characterised by 'a love for luxury, for *appearance*, and a barbaric execution, smacking of decadence: it was no longer antique sculpture, it was not like in France a frank imitation of local flora; it was a compromise without style, without character, between Roman and Byzantine traditions and the influences of Northern arts'.⁴¹⁴

On top of suggesting that the Eclectic character of Italian Renaissance architecture gave off an air of tasteless extravagance or excess, his use of the word compromise suggested that the mixture of styles did not so much

⁴¹³ « S'arrête à l'apparence des édifices, à leur enveloppe superficielle, et qu'il se satisfait d'énoncer les règles de l'ordonnance, celles de la composition monumentale, en laissant tout ignorer de la logique *réelle* sur laquelle repose l'art de bâtir », Damisch, p. 21.

⁴¹⁴ « Un amour pour le luxe, pour le *paraître*, et une exécution barbare, sentant la décadence : ce n'est plus la sculpture antique, ce n'est pas comme en France l'imitation franche de la flore locale ; c'est un compromis sans style, sans caractère, entre les traditions romaines et byzantins et les influences des arts du nord », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (pp. 240-241).

compound the beauty of their individual elements, but cancel one another out; recalling the argument he made in the *Annales* about the agglomeration of good elements not resulting in a good end product.⁴¹⁵ It is also worth remarking that his portrayal of Italian Renaissance architecture strongly evoked the Beaux-Arts and Napoleon III styles, which, as has been noted, drew much inspiration from the former. Thus, by attacking Italian architecture, Viollet-le-Duc was also attacking contemporary French styles, not to mention the Eclecticists' approach to restoration, which reflected the trend for combining everything from the Roman and Gothic to Baroque and Neoclassical styles in historic and modern monuments alike. An excellent example of Viollet-le-Duc's opposition to this Italian Eclecticism can be seen in his submission (Fig. 4.2) to the 1860 competition for designing the new Paris opera, which was ultimately won by Garnier.⁴¹⁶ Contrary to what was expected of a Gothicismist, Viollet-le-Duc's submission featured the style and trappings of the Corinthian order throughout, with a nod to Beaux-Arts neoclassicism.⁴¹⁷ However, the flaw of the design was that it was 'above all functionalist, compact,' presenting 'little to no ornament'

⁴¹⁵ Ibid; Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national, (p. 305).

⁴¹⁶ Poisson and Poisson, p. 212.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

which was markedly unusual for the period.⁴¹⁸ It was ‘deprived of the charm, the glow, the festive splendour, the affirmed triumphalism which make the glory’ of Garnier’s Eclectic conception; ‘detonating’ amid an urban environment.⁴¹⁹ Regardless of having failed to secure the commission, however, the fact that Viollet-le-Duc was willing to present an edifice which contradicted his rationalist theory of architecture by being of a neo-classical disposition, albeit subdued by contemporary standards, demonstrates how strongly he felt that Eclecticism, with all its capricious Italianate ornamentation, would be the bane of French architectural culture; it seemed as though he could stomach a neoclassical France, but never an Eclectic one which showed utter disregard for science, national history, and the laws of sensible construction.

In fact, he took great pains to impress upon the readers of the *Entretiens* that the use of foreign arts in France, Italian or otherwise, had serious consequences for its own native arts. In one passage he noted that it was because the French had too often misapprehended their own arts over the course of their history that they, ‘after so many variations, have become

⁴¹⁸ « Avant tout fonctionnaliste, compact », « peu ou pas d’ornement », Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ « Dépourvu du charme, de l’éclat, de la splendeur festive, du triomphalisme affirmé qui font la gloire », « détonant », Ibid.

degraded, no longer know which time or which people to relate to'.⁴²⁰ He specifically expressed that this misapprehension resulted from adopting arts which, while certainly having their own merit, belonged neither to the French soil, nor its people. He also remarked that while 'it is well and good to have a cosmopolitan spirit, to admit that all humans are brothers, that all ideas belong to everyone,' he stressed that in reality, 'our French brain is not built like that of our neighbour the Englishman or the German'.⁴²¹ His use of the phrase 'it is well and good' underscores how, as shown in 'Antiquités américaines' especially, he did not believe that all humans belonged to the same nation or race, or that the ideas of one should necessarily be partaken of by another. This interpretation is concretised by his remark; 'let us profit from the ideas of our neighbours, but let us know how to have some of our own, since we can, and above all let us not believe that, by the very fact that other peoples are or have been endowed with a rare intelligence, with an

⁴²⁰ « Après tant de variations, se sont abâtardis, ne savent plus ni à quel temps ni à quel peuple se rattacher », Viollet-le-Duc, 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 246).

⁴²¹ « Il est beau d'avoir l'esprit cosmopolite, d'admettre que tous les humains sont frères, que toutes les idées appartiennent à tous », « notre cerveau de Français n'est pas construit comme celui de notre voisin l'Anglais ou le Germain », Ibid.

original creative imagination, we are absolutely forbidden to have any'; which highlights his desire to inculcate a more Francocentric approach to the arts in France.⁴²²

For Viollet-le-Duc, the Gothic was an art which the French should never have tossed aside in favour of the more cosmopolitan Classical style and its derivations. After its birth at the end of the twelfth century, the Gothic 'had completely freed itself from anything that could hinder its independence and its national appearance: it had recast traditions, it had accepted principles as liberal as one could ask for'; why would the French, for whom liberty is as sacred a virtue as any, want to adopt an architecture originating from civilisations who, as Viollet-le-Duc remarked earlier, were not even half as libertarian or politically united?⁴²³ The 'disaster of the

⁴²² « Profitons des idées de nos voisins, mais sachons en avoir à nous, puisque nous le pouvons, et ne croyons pas surtout que, par cela même que d'autres peuples sont ou ont été doués d'une intelligence rare, d'une imagination créatrice originale, il nous est absolument interdit d'en avoir », Ibid.

⁴²³ « S'était complètement affranchi de tout ce qui pouvait gêner son indépendance et son allure nationale : il avait refondu les traditions, il avait admis des principes aussi *libéraux* qu'on puisse les demander », Ibid.

institutions of the Middle Ages,' notably the feudal system, which 'was not an institution in keeping with the French character,' was in his mind chiefly responsible for misconceptions regarding the Gothic; being unfortunately born amid that troublesome time.⁴²⁴ Yet he discredited this association as a just reason 'not to rehabilitate it, not to seek, in its broad principles, so consistent with our spirit, the elements which can serve us today'.⁴²⁵ He was convinced that the character, tendencies, and needs of a nation, or race, did not change with time; 'neither conquests, nor institutions, nor political demarcations, nor combinations of diplomacy are of any weight to modify the minds of the races which cover the globe'.⁴²⁶ According to this principle of unchanging national qualities, it followed that architecture, being determined by them directly according to his rationalist theory, should be

⁴²⁴ « Le désastre des institutions du moyen âge », « n'était pas une institution en rapport avec le caractère français », Ibid., (pp. 246-247).

⁴²⁵ « Ne pas le réhabiliter, pour ne pas chercher, dans ses principes si larges, si conformes à notre esprit, les éléments qui peuvent aujourd'hui nous servir », Ibid., (p. 247).

⁴²⁶ « Ni les conquêtes, ni les institutions, ni les délimitations politiques, ni les combinaisons de la diplomatie ne sont d'aucun poids pour modifier l'esprit des races qui couvrent le globe », Ibid.

viewed as equally indelible; not something which can readily be discarded or covered up for the sake of following a cosmopolitan tendency.

Indeed, as Viollet-le-Duc had related in many of his prior publications, the Gallo-Romano-Frankish spirit of the French was not altered at any point between the birth of the nation and the modern day. That said, he expanded upon this idea in the *Entretiens* by explicating how even with the adoption of Italian architectural elements beginning in the sixteenth century, the Gothic did not lose its native national character. He related that after the Italian wars at the end of the fifteenth century, the French nobles returned to the fatherland wanting ‘to replace their old castles and manor houses with pleasure palaces; they dreamed of porticos, columns, galleries, and symmetrical facades’.⁴²⁷ Unlike in thirteenth century France, where ‘it was the artists who alone provoked the movement’ those in the sixteenth century ‘accepted what was printed for them’ and adopted ‘the new taste’ of their clients.⁴²⁸ Here Viollet-le-Duc underlined that the shift back to antique arts was not by the initiation of the third estate, unlike with the Gothic, but by the first. This notion is significant because it suggests that,

⁴²⁷ « Remplacer leurs vieux châteaux et manoirs par des palais de plaisance ; ils rêvent portiques, colonnes, galeries, façades symétriques », Ibid., (p. 242).

⁴²⁸ « Ce sont les artistes qui avaient seuls provoqué le mouvement », « acceptent celui qu’on leur imprime », « le goût nouveau », Ibid.

not being initiated willingly by the mass of the nation, but rather imposed upon them by the nobility and the monarchy, this Eclectic Italianate architecture was not a manifestation of the national will; it was rather a perversion of the principle of national architecture, a pseudo-national architecture. That said, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that the secular laity, holding on to the arts which it had seized in the Middle Ages, took but the outward appearance of antique styles.⁴²⁹ They preserved the national skeleton, so to speak, and ‘they continued to build Gothic buildings, in terms of general provisions, and in terms of structure’.⁴³⁰ If only for the sake of pleasing their masters, these indelibly Gothic artisans ‘threw over this old body a new garment, composed of a few scraps taken from the Italian Renaissance’.⁴³¹ Simply put, the adoption of Italian forms was entirely superficial according to Viollet-le-Duc. The principles and methods of the Gothic, honed over centuries, did not change. The French architects ‘took from the Italians neither their construction methods nor the general provisions of their plans. They continued to draw their Gothic plans, to build like their predecessors,

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ « Ils continuent à construire des édifices, quant aux dispositions générales, quant à la structure », Ibid.

⁴³¹ « Jettent sur ce vieux corps un vêtement nouveau, composé de quelques bribes tirées de la Renaissance italienne », Ibid.

and to install pitched roofs'.⁴³² They 'could not suddenly leave aside the imperiously logical methods of their predecessors,' for 'the old French school' yet resided within them, 'they avoided banality with care and sought contrarily this distinction which lends an appeal to the most ordinary things,' citing the example of French sixteenth-century French architects resisting the Classical tendency for repetitive horizontal entablatures and instead emulating the Gothic system of columns and pilasters spanning several stories unbroken (Fig. 4.4).⁴³³ Thus, despite experiencing some superficial changes during the aftermath of the Italian wars and during the wars of religion, the Gothic survived the Italian influence at its core, with all its 'disordered fantasies,' all the way up to the reign of Louis XIV, who, only after going to great lengths, managed to denationalise the French arts; the

⁴³² « Ne prennent aux Italiens ni leurs procédés de construction, ni leurs dispositions générales de leurs plans. Ils continuent à tracer leurs plans gothiques, à construire comme leurs prédécesseurs, à poser des toits aigus », Ibid.

⁴³³ « Ne pouvaient brusquement laisser de côté les méthodes impérieusement logiques de leurs devanciers », « la vieille école française », « ils évitaient avec soin la banalité et recherchaient au contraire cette distinction qui prête un attrait aux choses les plus ordinaires », Ibid., 'Huitième entretien,' (p. 374).

consequences of which the nation was facing even in the nineteenth century.⁴³⁴

Viollet-le-Duc's depiction of the Gothic as a permanent, static construction system contrasted significantly with the way that the Eclecticists saw the history of French architecture. As detailed by Van Zanten in *Designing Paris*, they conceptualised it as something that was 'evolving step by step, each step a continuation and inflection of the preceding one'.⁴³⁵ The crux of the difference between these two perspectives seems to be the understanding of the forces which drive architectural development. While Viollet-le-Duc saw architecture as a necessary response to such factors as cultural tradition, climate, race, materials, factors which he saw as unchanging, the Eclecticists framed it as being pushed along by ever evolving social, philosophical, and technological forces.⁴³⁶ They believed that a culture's architectural canon or order was tied more to its state of scientific knowledge than any of its permanent attributes, and they maintained that 'beauty lies not in a form, static and unchanging through ages, but in a principle that manifests itself progressively and differently in

⁴³⁴ « Fantaisies désordonnées », Ibid., 'Sixième entretien,' (p. 243).

⁴³⁵ Van Zanten, p. 49.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

each epoch'.⁴³⁷ This argument, which as has been shown had taken root in contemporary architectural practice and theory, was a threat to Viollet-le-Duc's restoration methodology, in that it necessitated the reconciliation of elements which he saw as separate and irreconcilable. As evidenced by his definition of restoration in his *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, which was considered in chapter two, he recommended that restorers put themselves in the shoes of the original architects and attempt to give life and reality to their visions, as opposed to preserving the works and ideas of consecutive architects who came centuries later, each bearing the mark and tastes of their own time.⁴³⁸

Despite reprising arguments made in most of his earlier publications, this chapter has shown that Viollet-le-Duc's *Entretiens* offered several new and significant ideas, bearing on and informed by contemporary developments in architectural theory and practice. Accentuating his nationalist arguments regarding the superiority of the French nation, both in the Middle-Ages and the present day, he underlined that its formation predated all others in Europe and was marked by a particular instinct toward unity amid individualistic societies. He added to his juxtaposition of Gothic and Classical construction systems by offering a pointed critique of

⁴³⁷ Ibid., p. 26, 49.

⁴³⁸ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Restauration,' (p. 14).

Italian medieval and Renaissance architecture, which, unlike the Gothic, were possessed of an extravagance and Eclecticism which invited degeneration by trickling down into contemporary architectural trends, education, and even approaches to restoration. To undermine the Eclecticist school of thought, according to which the Gothic was but one stage in a process of continual combinatory metamorphosis, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that it was in fact the static and unchanging foundation of all French architecture up until the seventeenth century, and that the forms which the Eclecticists labelled as evolutions or inflections in style were in fact superficial attachments, without relation between form and function, and unsuited to the French in every possible way.

Chapter 5: Post-war Pedagogy

Viollet-le-Duc's *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871* (1871), *Histoire d'une maison* (1873), *Histoire d'une forteresse* (1874), *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* (1875), and posthumously published *Histoire d'un dessinateur* (1879), tapped into a nationalist pedagogical impulse following the Franco-Prussian war as a means of bringing his ideas concerning the history and theory of architecture to a new, younger audience; one less prejudiced or indoctrinated against them than the adherents of the Beaux-Arts. In addition to adopting a generally more literary style to suit the change in readership, his post-war publications, especially the histories, differed from his prior works in that they were a consolidation or distillation of an enormous body of ideas into compact, easily accessible and understandable stories. Whereas he had previously written lectures, dictionaries, and articles in scholarly journals, across which his ideas were somewhat thinly spread, and which not every reader might grasp in their entirety, the histories functioned as a condensed crash-course in the theory of rationalism in architecture.

The only substantial change to this theory was that in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, he situated its application in a global context, in a way that made the architectural traditions belonging to each race so distinct, as to encourage the reader to view their mixture with criticism and disdain.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that his post-war texts were typified by a catechistic structure, often featuring extended dialogues between characters voicing points and counterpoints in a dissection of architectural theory, something which Emery actually identifies in the *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale*.⁴³⁹ In this new textual format, Viollet-le-Duc was able to further justify the necessity of respecting national architecture and undermine the contemporary trend for Classical architecture and its offshoots, especially the Eclectic Italianate Beaux-Arts and Napoleon III styles, notwithstanding the effects that this trend had in the realm of monumental restoration. In fact, it could be said that the *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris* and the histories were explicitly designed to ensure that future generations of French architects, seeing the importance of upholding the national arts in their integrity, would eschew Eclecticism altogether, and restore France's medieval patrimony to its original or ideal state.

The cost of suppressing national architecture

In 1862, seeking to fulfil his uncle's quest to dismantle the 'multinational empires of Austria and Russia and encourage the formation of liberal new nation-states in their place that would rally around France,' Napoleon III urged Prussian Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck to unify the 39

⁴³⁹ Emery, (p. 114).

states of the German Confederation which had replaced the Holy Roman Empire following the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815).⁴⁴⁰ What the emperor did not anticipate, however, is that Bismarck would need a war between France and the Northern German Confederation, formed under Prussian leadership in 1866 after its military successes against Denmark and Austria between 1864 and 1865, to induce the Southern German states to join their brethren and complete the unification process.⁴⁴¹ After a series of French diplomatic blunders involving a potential Prussian king on the Spanish throne which would see the Bonapartes hemmed in by the rival Hohenzollern dynasty, carefully orchestrated by Bismarck, the Emperor's political circle lead the nation in all its nationalist fervour into a disastrous six-month war from 1870 to 1871; whose consequences were the fall of the Second French Empire, the civil war of the Paris Commune, the creation of the third Republic, and the establishment of the German Empire under Prussian hegemony.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870–1871* (Cambridge University press, 2003), p. 9, 13.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 16-40.

⁴⁴² Melville De Lancey Landon, *The Franco-Prussian War in a Nutshell* (G. W. Carleton, 1871); *The Franco-German War: 1870-1871*, ed. and trans. by John Frederick Maurice (Swan Sonnenschein, 1900).

For Viollet-le-Duc, who played an active role in organising defences for the siege of Paris in 1871, the war revealed several major faults in the conduct of French national affairs which had to be rectified posthaste. Of note, he claimed that it was ‘especially and first of all the education of the youth’ which had to be rethought, for, ‘if the name of Frenchman obliges, we must put new generations in a state of supporting it worthily’.⁴⁴³ As pointed out by Emery, ‘blaming the inferiority of the French educational system—particularly its methods of teaching history—became widespread after the war, and children’s education began to be considered integral for rebuilding and strengthening the French nation.’⁴⁴⁴ She also notes that in children’s literature of the post-war period, the portrayal of ‘French history appeared as an ongoing struggle for liberty and self-government.’⁴⁴⁵ Though it should be stressed that, as shown in chapter two particularly, Viollet-le-Duc had long featured this narrative, which he saw as central to the formation of the nation and the national architecture. That said, Emery’s

⁴⁴³ « Surtout et d’abord l’éducation de la jeunesse », « si le nom de Français oblige, il faut mettre les nouvelles générations en état de le soutenir dignement », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871* (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1871), p. xxxv.

⁴⁴⁴ Emery, (p. 113).

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., (p. 114).

assertion that Viollet-le-Duc followed his republican peers in the ‘popularisation of history as an act of patriotism, an attempt to encourage children and lower classes to recognise the course of French history as the logical outcome of human actions,’ holds up against an analysis of Viollet-le-Duc’s post-war publications, as will be seen in this chapter.⁴⁴⁶

Bressani describes the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris* as ‘an exposition of what should have been done during the Siege of Paris to resist the enemy,’ but in a broader sense, he terms it ‘a full-scale treatise on warfare that seeks to diagnose the fundamental causes of Prussia’s superiority, identifying France’s weaknesses, and the long-term remedies necessary to cure it.’⁴⁴⁷ Through dialogues between nameless characters who experienced the events of the war, including one who shows evidence of being the author himself, Viollet-le-Duc argued that the French had lost against the Prussians because they were not possessed of an authentic nationalist sentiment, remarking that they had ‘more patriotic vanity than true patriotism, more imagination than reflection.’⁴⁴⁸ They had trusted in ‘the shadow of Napoleon

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., (pp. 118-119).

⁴⁴⁷ Bressani, 454.

⁴⁴⁸ « Plus de vanité patriotique que de vrai patriotisme, plus d’imagination que de réflexion », Viollet-le-Duc, *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871*, p. xii.

I,' a warmonger who brought the nation to its knees in pursuit of a personal ambition, rather than attune themselves with the real essence of their national identity.⁴⁴⁹ With respect to the arts, Viollet-le-Duc asserted that imperial France had adopted an excessively cosmopolitan attitude, which had in fact contributed significantly to its defeat in 1871.

He remarked that the French had been too eager, 'by a sentiment of infantile vanity, to show what [they] possess to strangers,' a fault which expedited the Prussians' advance throughout French territory, since they had come to know it inside and out, especially its infrastructure and military architecture.⁴⁵⁰ The implication of this statement is that France should not have opened its doors so lightly, or shared its artistic genius so readily, a point which was also made in the *Entretiens* as was considered in the previous chapter. This interpretation is also underlined by his observation that the French have 'no hatred, which is a misfortune for a great people, and [they] cannot believe that others would harbour any for [them]'.⁴⁵¹ With

⁴⁴⁹ « L'ombre de Napoléon I », Ibid., p. iv.

⁴⁵⁰ « Par un sentiment de vanité enfantine, à montrer aux étrangers ce que nous possédons », Ibid., p. xv.

⁴⁵¹ « Pas de haine, c'est un malheur chez un grand peuple, et ne pouvons croire que les autres en gardent pour nous », Ibid.

this statement, he essentially advocated for a policy of systematic xenophobia, which he implied was not only admirable, but necessary in any nation with a pretence to greatness; once again recalling Gobineau's position that the mingling of races or nations contributed to their degeneration.⁴⁵²

This notion is also expressed in the *Histoire d'une forteresse*, which centres on the historical development of a fictional citadel in France, Roche-Pont, from the time of the earliest Gaulish settlement to the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, mirroring the structure of the *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale*. The 'extracts from Captain Jean's papers' regarding the siege of Roche-Pont during said war are especially indicative of Viollet-le-Duc's nationalist perspective and echo the fore-said juxtaposition of cosmopolitan and xenophobic attitudes and their bearing on the arts. In response to those who would ask 'what good is independence? What good is love of the soil? What good is the memory of sacrifices?' the captain says, 'do not blaspheme, egotistic philosophy; be quiet before centuries of struggle, before these layers of bones and this piled up debris which make up the soil of the fatherland'; a powerful image for an adolescents' storybook.⁴⁵³ He

⁴⁵² De Gobineau, II, pp. 560-561.

⁴⁵³ « A quoi bon l'indépendance ? A quoi bon l'amour du sol ? A quoi bon le souvenir des sacrifices ? », « ne blasphème pas, philosophie de l'égoïsme ;

continues, ‘the day when that which is called fraternity between peoples becomes a reality, the reign of senile barbarism and of the shames of decadence will not be distant’; a notion which yet again evokes the apocalypse which awaits a humanity without distinctions of race, as detailed in Gobineau’s *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines*.⁴⁵⁴ While in the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris* he made the argument for hostility or at the very least apathy between nations in a more tentative manner, this passage is decidedly pointed, rather urging the reader to embrace a patriotic and xenophobic spirit than simply informing them of its importance.

Throughout the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris*, Viollet-le-Duc stressed that the French ought rather to ‘think on the country, on all it lacks’ in order to reclaim their rank; they must concern themselves with French affairs, for they have no more of an affinity with German philosophy or British

tais-toi devant des siècles de lutttes, devant ces couches d’ossements et ces d’débris entassés qui ont fait le sol de la patrie », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’une forteresse* (J. Hetzel, 1874), p. 359.

⁴⁵⁴ « Le jour où ce qu’on appelle la fraternité entre les peuples deviendrait une réalité, le règne de la barbarie sénile et des hontes de la décadence ne serait pas éloigné », Ibid.; De Gobineau, II, pp. 560-561.

economics, as they do with Flemish painting or Italian architecture.⁴⁵⁵ What is made by and for the French is understood by them, what is not, is not. For Viollet-le-Duc, the results of the war were a testament to the importance of cultivating national interests above all others. This idea is evinced by his remarks about Louis XIV, which bear particularly on the national arts. He asserted that the French had, since the time of Louis XIV, conducted themselves 'like sheep' and had not known how to 'refuse to be treated as such by shepherds and wolves.'⁴⁵⁶ Louis XIV, who, as the 'first perpetrator of [French] misfortunes by his spirit of conquest and his mania of domination over everything and everywhere,' lead the people 'like a docile flock, well united, well parked, grazing at the master's will; we gave to this the name of national unity'.⁴⁵⁷ As has been shown in previous chapters, Viollet-le-Duc

⁴⁵⁵ « Songeant au pays, à tout ce qui lui manque », Viollet-le-Duc, *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871*, p. xli.

⁴⁵⁶ « Comme des moutons », « se refuser à être traités comme tels par les bergers et les loups », Ibid., p. vii.

⁴⁵⁷ « Premier fauteur de nos malheurs par son esprit de conquête et sa manie de domination sur tout et partout », « comme un docile troupeau, bien un, bien parqué, paissant au gré du maître ; on a donné à cela le nom d'unité nationale », Ibid.

repeatedly blamed Louis XIV for having denationalised the arts and weakening them in the process, however here in the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris*, he directly compared the king to the Bonapartes, framing him as the representation of a false national identity built on the ghost of the Roman Empire.⁴⁵⁸ Viollet-le-Duc also echoed his position regarding Louis XIV, ‘who did enough harm to our country for us to still pay today for his selfishness, his vanity and his faults,’ in the *Histoire d’un dessinateur*, the last of the histories, published posthumously in 1879.⁴⁵⁹ To illustrate the process by which the French native arts were smothered by both Louis XIV and the institutions he inaugurated, he offered an analogy of greenhouses, which, while resting on French soil and being intended for the cultivation of French arts, ended up being fatal to them.⁴⁶⁰ Soon after their construction, the greenhouses became havens for plants which would not grow naturally upon the French soil, and by ‘considering as weeds anything that still wanted to vegetate outside the greenhouses’ the true French art was weeded out

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ « Qui a fait assez de mal à notre pays pour que nous payions encore aujourd’hui son égoïsme, sa vanité et ses fautes », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’un dessinateur : Comment on apprend à dessiner* (J. Hetzel, 1879), p. 245.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 240.

systematically.⁴⁶¹ There is little doubt that the greenhouses to which Viollet-le-Duc was referring were the Écoles des Beaux-Arts, for whom the Classical arts of Rome and Greece of Antiquity were more worthy of cultivating than that which grew on French soil, the Gothic. The fact that he used an analogy to encapsulate an argument to which he devoted so much of his work, of his life, is a testament to how the histories were meant to transmit his ideas as plainly and succinctly as possible, and that the *Histoire d'un dessinateur* in particular was effectively his last word on the subject.

While Viollet-le-Duc did not overtly express in the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris* or the histories that Louis XIV's and the Beaux-Arts' denationalisation and Italianisation of the French arts, especially architecture, began a series of events which brought about France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, the connection that can be drawn between these ideas is tangible. His statements suggest that by abandoning or suppressing its national architecture, the Gothic, France diluted and compromised the power and originality of its national identity to such a degree that a rival nation, being much more in tune with its own, was easily able to humble the French in the eyes of Europe. Indeed, he continually praised the Prussians, if not for their 'odious and hardly Christian' tactics, for the robustness of

⁴⁶¹ « Considérer comme mauvaises herbes tout ce qui voulait encore végéter en dehors des serres », Ibid.

their nationality.⁴⁶² His stance that Prussia won because of an alignment of purpose and conviction from top to bottom can be juxtaposed against his remark about the false sense of national unity imposed upon the French by Louis XIV, and underlines how the Prussians had cultivated, rather than stifled their national genius.⁴⁶³ As was considered in chapter two, Viollet-le-Duc maintained that national arts depended on the will of the masses rising from below, and not the whims of the monarchy or nobility acting from above. Thus, he implied that as the true representation of the French people, the Gothic must be preserved and restored in order to ensure the nation's survival. This argument about the results of embracing a cosmopolitan outlook in the arts also bore on the contemporary dialogue regarding Eclecticism in historic restoration. Of note, it suggested that more than resulting in bizarre or ugly edifices which failed to satisfy the relation between form and function necessitated by rational French architecture, allowing the traces of foreign influences to remain in Gothic edifices could have materially disastrous consequences.

⁴⁶² « Odieux et peu chrétien », Viollet-le-Duc, *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris : Septembre 1870 — Janvier 1871*, p. x.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., pp. ix-x.

The universal application of rationalism

What becomes immediately evident in the histories is that Viollet-le-Duc repurposed almost everything regarding the Gothic and the necessity for rational architecture which he had written in prior texts. In fact, this is something which Emery noted about the *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale*, claiming that in the text, Viollet-le-Duc 'copied nearly verbatim many ideas' from his *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*.⁴⁶⁴ As underlined by Emery, the major difference between the histories and works such as the dictionaries, is that the former were conceived of as works of fiction, complete with 'character development, dialogue, foreshadowing, and creation of suspense,' which presented 'little-known historical or architectural material' to older children and adolescents through fictional vignettes.⁴⁶⁵ This series should be understood as the sort of educational material that Viollet-le-Duc called for in the *Memoire sur la defense de Paris*, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, designed to instil a sense of national pride in the readers, all the while instructing them in the finer points of architectural history, especially that of France.

⁴⁶⁴ Emery, (p. 106).

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., (p. 106, 102).

In the *Histoire d'une Maison*, which is effectively an extended lecture on how to build a house whose every detail is 'the consequence either of a necessity of the structure, or of the needs of the inhabitants' (Fig. 5.1), Viollet-le-Duc repackaged much of what he had written before concerning civic architecture, in a way that was easy to grasp for a younger audience.⁴⁶⁶ What is especially interesting, is that through his characters, he juxtaposed Eclecticism and a preference for Classical architecture against a more reasonable concern for the relation between form and function. One of the characters, Mr Durosay, who is described as being an especially impractical man with an unsuccessful career in construction, remarks that residential buildings in Northern Italy, 'with their porticoes, their terraces, their large, wide open vestibules, their lodges overlooking the countryside' have a magnificent appearance; they 'ennoble life, one could say, broaden the narrow ideas to which our time is only too inclined'.⁴⁶⁷ To this, another

⁴⁶⁶ « La conséquence soit d'une nécessité de la structure, soit des besoins des habitants », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'une Maison* (J. Hetzel, 1873), p. 117.

⁴⁶⁷ « Avec leurs portiques, leurs terrasses, leurs larges vestibules biens ouverts, leurs loges donnant sur la campagne », « ennoblissent la vie, pourrait-on dire, élargissent les idées étroites, auxquelles notre époque n'est que trop portée », Ibid., p. 138.

character, Mr de Gandelau responds that ‘it is not a work of art that I intend to leave to my daughter; it is a good house, comfortable and solid’.⁴⁶⁸ He adds that the galleries and porticoes of which Mr Durosay speaks are only good in France for catching rheumatisms in the winter, and as ‘mushroom greenhouses’ in summer.⁴⁶⁹ While they may be convenient at Nice or Menton, there is ‘nothing practical’ about them in the French countryside.⁴⁷⁰ Similarly, when Mr Durosay extols the beauty of the then recently uncovered ruins at Pompeii, a third character remarks at the impracticality of emulating architecture not designed for the French climate; ‘since we are hardly on the shores of the Gulf of Naples and we have very different habits from those which suited the Pompeians, our residences cannot in any way recall theirs’.⁴⁷¹ The latter goes on to say that if in France, houses were built with bedrooms opening onto ‘a courtyard surrounded by a portico,’ as was

⁴⁶⁸ « Ce n’est pas une œuvre d’art que je prétends laisser à ma fille ; c’est une bonne maison, commode et solide », Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ « Serres à champignons », Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁷⁰ « Rien de pratique », Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ « Puisque nous ne sommes point sur les rivages du golfe de Naples et que nous avons des habitudes fort différentes de celles qui conviennent aux Pompéiens, nos demeures ne sauraient en aucune façon rappeler les leurs », Ibid., p. 141.

common in ancient Roman habitations, it would be inconvenient as ‘there would be a strong risk of catching a cold if the door were left open, or of suffocating if it were closed’.⁴⁷²

When discussing materials, one character in the *Histoire d’une maison* explains how the ‘delicacies’ of the profiles and ornaments which the ancient Greeks carved out of white marble, could never be reproduced with French limestone, which is a much coarser substance.⁴⁷³ Even the practice of using marble facing or veneer on coarser stone, which is possible in a warmer climate such as in Greece, would be highly impractical in France, where the temperature during winter fluctuates between minus four and around fifteen degrees, which would cause permeated water to crack the stone by expanding.⁴⁷⁴ By using simple, practical anecdotes like those just considered, Viollet-le-Duc transferred his ideas from a rather nebulous theoretical sphere into a more grounded and easily graspable one. Furthermore, with the serialised dictionaries or the *Entretiens*, for example, a reader was likely to pick up a volume and reference an article or two and not be made aware of

⁴⁷² « Une cour entourée d’un portique », « on risquerait fort de s’enrhumer si on laissait la porte ouverte, ou d’étouffer si on la fermait », Ibid.

⁴⁷³ « Délicatesses », Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

the greater arguments being made about architectural rationalism. Thus, works like the *Histoire d'une maison* delivered the message in one sitting, leaving the reader with a much clearer and complete impression of Viollet-le-Duc's ideas applied to practical construction. It should also be noted that while the histories were designed for young readers, Viollet-le-Duc's reputation meant that they were equally taken up by adults interested in the history and theory of architecture. A testament to this is a series of articles in *The Builder* called 'The Household at Different Eras' published in the late 1870s, which considered books like the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* as they would any other serious scholarly work.

The notion of French architecture's greater suitability for use in France is also made in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, which followed the characters Épergos and Doxi as they traverse space and time, encountering history's great human civilizations. When Épergos and Doxi visit a building site of a stately home in France during the Renaissance (Fig. 5.2), they are astounded by the suppression of the native Gothic style under Classical elements. Épergos states that the Gothic architects had developed 'a system of vaults superior to what the Romans did, in that it allows absolute freedom in its use, light system, easy to apply everywhere, appropriate to the nature

of the materials that our country has in abundance'.⁴⁷⁵ He argues that the Gothic system was 'an improvement, a useful discovery' and to abandon it, 'to return to the ancient Roman vault, the construction of which is only reasonable as long as the processes adopted by the Romans are employed, which you do not,' is contrary to logic and reason.⁴⁷⁶ It is difficult to deny that by characterising the French use of Roman architecture in this manner, Viollet-le-Duc sought to undermine the ideas perpetuated by the Beaux-Arts, as considered in previous chapters, that Classical architecture was inherently harmonious and rational, regardless of its being divorced from its original construction context. Furthermore, in recalling the argument made in the *Entretiens*, Viollet-le-Duc conveyed through Épergos that

⁴⁷⁵ « Un système de voûtes supérieur à ce que les Romains ont fait, en ce qu'il permet une liberté absolue dans son emploi, système léger, facile à appliquer partout, approprié à la nature des matériaux que notre pays possède en abondance », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine : Depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (J. Hetzel, 1875), pp. 350-351.

⁴⁷⁶ « Un perfectionnement, une découverte utile », « retourner à la voûte antique romaine, dont la construction n'est raisonnable qu'autant qu'on emploie les procédés adoptés par les Romains, ce que vous ne faites pas », Ibid.

despite changes of external appearance to French architecture in the Renaissance, its substantive, skeletal character could not be changed any more than the national or racial character of the French; 'It was a mistake, and moreover, it was not possible'.⁴⁷⁷ In fact, one of the core messages in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* is that the architecture belonging to a race or nation is not something which can easily be changed, if at all. Regarding this, Épergos explains that it is no more possible for someone 'to cross out a page from the book of humanity than to subtract one of the strata of the earth's layers, under the pretext that it is rude. What is acquired, is acquired'.⁴⁷⁸ It is interesting to observe that Viollet-le-Duc's analogy of it being impossible to cross out a page from the book of humanity did not apply to his invasive restoration of Gothic monuments, which is a testament to his conviction that the changes made to French national architecture since the Renaissance were purely superficial, and not in any way representative of a changed essence.

⁴⁷⁷ « C'était une erreur, et de plus, ce n'était pas possible », Ibid., p. 368.

⁴⁷⁸ « Biffer une page du livre de l'humanité que de soustraire une des strates de la couche terrestre, sous le prétexte qu'elle est grossière. Ce qui est acquis, est acquis », Ibid.

Épergos even remarked that the Greeks and Romans themselves, whom the likes of Louis XIV and the Beaux-Arts admired so much, would laugh to see that their native styles of architecture were being emulated from Paris, Madrid, and Stockholm, to Vienna, and Saint Petersburg ‘without regard to the origins, the aptitudes of the people, the climate, the materials, the new conditions created for society’ in which those monuments were raised.⁴⁷⁹ Viollet-le-Duc first made this argument in the *Annales* in 1845, where he stressed that the spirit of Greek art was essentially the same as that of the Gothic; its form was designed explicitly to satisfy contextual function.⁴⁸⁰ To emulate an architectural methodology is one thing, but it is another to extract a form and structure catered to a given context and transplant it to an entirely different one, for the sake of aesthetics alone. Despite being a Gothicismist, Viollet-le-Duc never once argued that Greek or Roman architectures were incompatible with the needs of those ancient civilisations (excepting perhaps the issue of scale identified in

⁴⁷⁹ « Sans se soucier des origines, des aptitudes des peuples, du climat, des matériaux, des conditions nouvelles faites à la société », Ibid., p. 369.

⁴⁸⁰ Viollet-le-Duc, ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II (suite et fin),’ (p. 147).

the *Dictionnaire du mobilier*), but rather that they did not correspond to those of other civilisations with different needs and resources, such as France.

What is perhaps more significant about the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, however, is that it advocated for the universality of the rational principle of architecture. In the 'Antiquités américaines,' he raised this idea but applied it more so to the architecture and civilizations of the pre-Columbian Yucatan peninsula and central Mexico, but in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, he applied it to a global scale. By showing how in all the ages of mankind across all continents, construction systems with their unique forms arose as necessary responses to the needs and resources of those civilisations, he was attempting to present his theory as a scientific principle, one which could be proven and re-proven; from the beginning of humanity, each race 'has adopted certain construction processes, processes whose primary elements are found throughout the centuries and still appear today as well as the roots of each of the languages spoken by these primitive races'.⁴⁸¹ In doing so, it seems clear that Viollet-le-Duc hoped to justify his assertion that the Gothic should be restored to its place at the

⁴⁸¹ « Ont adopté certains procédés de construction, procédés dont les éléments premiers se retrouvent à travers les siècles et apparaissent encore aujourd'hui aussi bien que les racines de chacune des langues parlées par ces races primitives », Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, p. 358.

heart of the French nation on the basis that it was in accordance with a universal principle, the very same that lead the Greeks and Romans to conceive of their own great forms of architecture for which they have been so celebrated.

That said, while texts like the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* might have succeeded in convincing adolescents and older children of these ideas, it is worth pointing out that scholars of the time found many faults therein, especially contributors to the British academic journal, *The Builder*. In the article series, 'The Household at Different Eras,' one critic noted that Viollet-le-Duc's principle of architectural rationalism was unlikely to be as universally applicable as he claimed in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*; 'it is a totally different matter when he applies all that he has been able to discover in his researches into French practice to Rome, Greece, Asia Minor, India, and Egypt'.⁴⁸² Another remarked that the text 'touches, as M. Viollet-le-Duc alone can touch, with absolute inaccuracy upon happy probabilities of the past,' and that the principles which he observed were very 'possibly imperceptible to the original builders'.⁴⁸³ These comments underlined how rather than drawing his conclusions by interpolating between known facts,

⁴⁸² [Anon.], 'The Household at Different Eras,' *The Builder*, 36 (1878), p. 151-153 (p. 151).

⁴⁸³ [Anon.], 'Retrospective,' *The Builder*, 34 (1876), pp. 1253-1255 (p. 1255).

Viollet-le-Duc was prone to extrapolating outward from his sphere of expertise via paths and patterns of his own imagination; indeed, he had never been to Egypt or India but did not let that prevent him from presenting his opinions as fact. One critic even accused *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* of being 'dangerous and erratic' and 'monstrously fictitious,' especially regarding the depiction of the ancient Grecian household.⁴⁸⁴ However, as has been seen with almost all of Viollet-le-Duc's publications, which could justifiably be termed works of propaganda, his concern for historical or scientific accuracy in the strict sense was secondary to his self-conviction and desire to impart his theories upon his readers.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris* and the histories were part of a post-war drive in France to reform the education of the youth, which Viollet-le-Duc saw as an opportunity to disseminate his ideas to a more receptive audience and compensate for having failed to capture the attention or imagination of the Beaux-Arts students in the early 1860s. However, these publications should also be understood as relating to a wider contemporary nationalist phenomenon. As Viollet-le-Duc wrote in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, 'everyone is already seeking and will seek more to know where he comes from, what he

⁴⁸⁴ [Anon.], 'The Household at Different Eras,' *The Builder*, 35 (1877), pp. 176-179 (p. 176).

is, and consequently, to adopt those original forms which suit the genius and the needs of his race. This movement is already very pronounced in England, Germany, Sweden, Russia; it will increase day by day'.⁴⁸⁵ In addition to drawing attention to the many nationalist movements which were being and had been felt for some time around the globe, Viollet-le-Duc situated his perspective on national architecture in contemporary developments in science and philosophy. Regarding the latter, he remarked that the philosopher's advice of knowing oneself is 'the beginning of all wisdom' and asserted that 'it is time to say to humanity: "Research your origins, you will know your abilities and you will be able to walk clearly in the true path of your destiny"'.⁴⁸⁶ Lines such as this demonstrate how the *Mémoire sur la défense de Paris* and the histories were not only meant to encourage the French youth to adopt a more patriotic attitude to their

⁴⁸⁵ « Chacun cherche déjà et cherchera davantage à savoir d'où il vient, quel il est, et par suite, à adopter ces formes originelles qui conviennent au génie et aux besoins de sa race. Ce mouvement est très-prononcé déjà en Angleterre, en Allemagne, en Suède, en Russie ; il s'accroîtra de jour en jour », Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, p. 369.

⁴⁸⁶ « Le commencement de toute sagesse », « il est temps de dire à l'humanité : « Recherche tes origines, tu connaîtras tes aptitudes et tu pourras marcher dans la véritable voie de tes destinées » », Ibid., p. 370.

history and artistic culture, but to instil in them a conception of architecture in particular which would make the nineteenth-century trend for the Italianate Beaux-Arts and Napoleon III styles seem insupportable, and indeed architectural Eclecticism in general. In this regard, it may be useful to recall what Viollet-le-Duc wrote about Eclecticism and archaeology all the way back in the *Annales* in 1844; that by studying the differences between the material cultures of different periods and races or nations, like those explored in the *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, one cannot help but see their mixture in architectural works as a contemptuous and chimeric abuse of science, historical fact, and rational construction principles.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁷ Viollet-le-Duc, 'De l'art étranger et de l'art national,' (p. 305).

Chapter 6: *L'Art russe*

Despite ostensibly being a treatise on Russian architecture and ornament, *L'Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir*, published in 1877, functioned as a manifesto for national architecture and for the purging of Classical arts on a continental, if not global scale. In the text, Viollet-le-Duc sought to convey that the Classical arts and their derivations, which had by then been firmly entrenched across Russian artistic society, could only ever be representations of pseudo-nationality, and that their continued emulation would perpetuate Russia's dependency on the West, its national disjointedness, and its artistic incapacity.⁴⁸⁸ As such, he urged that these Antique arts be chased from Russia indefinitely, and indeed from every other country onto which they had been grafted following the spread of Renaissance and Enlightenment ideas. While *L'Art russe* reiterated Viollet-le-Duc's rationalist doctrine, stressing the need for Russian national architecture to meet its unique sociopolitical and geoclimatic needs, it also advocated for an idealist approach, constituting a selective process of keeping and discarding architectural elements that

⁴⁸⁸ Louis Réau, *L'Art russe des origines à Pierre le Grand* (Firmin-Didot, 1921), p. 4.

respectively aligned or contrasted with the nation's ideal conception of itself.

Viollet-le-Duc had intimated prior to *L'Art russe* that the development of national architecture might be a partially subjective process, especially in his account of the French crown's curation of Gothic ingredients in the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, where Philippe II Auguste supposedly chose the elements which seemed to him to suit the functional needs of the new French nation.⁴⁸⁹ Likewise, Viollet-le-Duc's definition of restoration in the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* called for architects to attempt to bring life to the visions conceived by medieval architects, and indeed, many of his restorations from before 1877 showed signs of a desire to establish an ideal rather than real historic monument; a dream of a history that should have been, not a testament to the one that was.⁴⁹⁰ However, *L'Art russe* was the first example of his clearly vocalising that it was necessary for an architecture to embody an ideal, a notion which directly buttressed his purist approach to restoration. While the choice of writing about Russian architecture might seem peculiar, the text was an enormous opportunity for Viollet-le-Duc to capitalise on his voice as 'an archaeologist of European reputation' to

⁴⁸⁹ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Architecture religieuse,' (p. 239).

⁴⁹⁰ Viollet-le-Duc, 'Restauration,' (p. 14).

address an international audience and situate the body of his ideas in a contemporary global architectural context.⁴⁹¹

Defining Russian national architecture

At the close of the text, Viollet-le-Duc cited a report by economist and art historian Cyr-François-Natalis Rondot (1821-1900) regarding the 1873 Exposition of Vienna, where he regretted to see how the native quality of Russian architecture had been ‘sometimes altered by a Finnic, Mongol, or Persian influence; sometimes half effaced by the traits borrowed from the Byzantine style or the Hindu style’.⁴⁹² Rondot, who had travelled to Russia several times on business between 1847 and 1855, added that Russian society had long been partial to and ‘charmed by the inventions of French art,’ and that it had recently ‘returned to the taste for the old Slavic art’.⁴⁹³ In

⁴⁹¹ « Un archéologue de réputation européenne », Réau, p. 4.

⁴⁹² « Tantôt altéré par quelque influence finnoise, mongole ou persane ; tantôt à demi effacé par des traits empruntés au style byzantin ou au style indou », Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *L’Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir* (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1877), p. 255.

⁴⁹³ ‘Rondot, Natalis,’ Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, 22 September 2009 <<https://www.inha.fr/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-lart-actifs-en-france-de-la-revolution-a-la-premiere-guerre-mondiale/rondot-natalis->

response to ‘this national movement of Russia in favour of its arts’ detailed by Rondot, Viollet-le-Duc intended for *L’Art russe* ‘to draw out the value of the arts which Russia possesses, the origins and the nature of these arts, how they proceeded, developed, and to specify the goal to which they must strive’.⁴⁹⁴ In this sense, the text was meant to act as a blueprint for architects in Russia who were interested in cultivating a national architecture (Figs. 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3), of whom Viollet-le-Duc was led to believe there were many. He asserted that Russian opinion ‘pronounces itself each day with more energy in favour of autonomy, and the emancipation of the serfs is an immense step toward the establishment of a Russian nationality, independent of foreign influences, living its own life, possessing its own genius’.⁴⁹⁵ His

inha/> [Accessed 2 November 2024]; « Charmée par les inventions de l’art français », « revenue au goût du vieil art slavon », Viollet-le-Duc, *L’Art russe*, p. 255.

⁴⁹⁴ « Ce mouvement national de la Russie en faveur de ses arts », « faire ressortir la valeur des arts que possède la Russie, les origines et la nature de ces arts, comment ils ont procédé, se sont développés, et de préciser le but où ils doivent tendre », Ibid., p. 255, 261.

⁴⁹⁵ « Se prononce chaque jour avec plus d’énergie en faveur de l’autonomie, et l’émancipation des serfs est un pas immense vers l’établissement d’une

remark that ‘this thinking, which deserves to be meditated upon elsewhere than in Russia,’ was a clear indication of his belief that the national architectural movement should be applied on a continental, if not global scale; Russia was but the beginning.⁴⁹⁶

It was not Rondot, however, who solicited Viollet-le-Duc to author the text. In *A Rational, National Architecture: Viollet-le-Duc's Modest Proposal for Russia*, Lauren O’Connell elucidates how it was ‘written at the behest of a group of Russian scholars with Slavophile leanings who were eager to promote abroad their politically motivated readings of the history and future course of Russian art.’⁴⁹⁷ She adds that Viollet-le-Duc’s foray into Russian arts came at a time when the topic of Russia’s modern architectural identity was being ‘hotly debated,’ and ‘prompted a flurry of critical response from prominent members of the Russian architectural

nationalité russe indépendante des influences étrangères, vivant de sa propre vie, possédant son génie propre », Ibid., p. 152.

⁴⁹⁶ « Cette pensée, qui mériterait d’être méditée ailleurs qu’en Russie », Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁹⁷ Lauren O’Connell, ‘A Rational, National Architecture: Viollet-le-Duc’s Modest Proposal for Russia,’ *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 52.4 (1993), pp. 436-452 (p. 436).

community'.⁴⁹⁸ The Slavophiles, among whom were those who encouraged and facilitated Viollet-le-Duc's creation of *L'Art russe* by furnishing him with histories and artistic resources, thereby skewing its message in their favour, wished for Russia to pursue a 'revivalist path and thus celebrate her national distinctiveness'.⁴⁹⁹ According to *L'Art russe des origines à Pierre le Grand* by Louis Réau (1881-1961), the Slavophiles hoped that Viollet-le-Duc could aid them in 'inciting their compatriots' to return the nation to its ancient traditions, 'long dominated and deviated by the imitation of western arts'.⁵⁰⁰ Given that these nationalist tendencies 'agreed with those of the illustrious savant who had made himself the champion of analogous ideas in France, he devoted himself willingly to this crusade'.⁵⁰¹ The Westernisers, on the contrary, emphasised the nation's European roots, valued the Classical arts, and sought to embrace 'the rational, technology-based trends of the future,

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., (p. 437).

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., (pp. 438-439).

⁵⁰⁰ « Longtemps dominé et dévoyé par l'imitation des arts occidentaux », Réau, p. 4.

⁵⁰¹ « S'accordaient avec celles de l'illustre savant qui s'était fait en France le champions d'idées analogues, il se voua de bonne grâce à cette croisade », Ibid.

in concert with the international community'.⁵⁰² Albeit unwittingly, the release of Viollet-le-Duc's book came at a pivotal period in the history of Russian nationalism. It is interesting to observe, furthermore, that the Slavophiles and Westernisers in Russia respectively mirrored the Gothicists and Beaux-Arts in France, complete with similar ideological differences.

With regard to national architecture, Viollet-le-Duc claimed, as a rule, that 'it is always a mistake, when one intends to perfect a social state, to begin by smothering its native qualities'.⁵⁰³ He stressed the need to disseminate this principle in official channels and declared that 'all national education must tend to distinguish them, to develop them and make them produce all that they can produce,' underlining how his histories, as considered in the previous chapter, were conceived for such a purpose.⁵⁰⁴ O'Connell herself, while not asserting that Viollet-le-Duc had designs

⁵⁰² O'Connell, (p. 438, 446).

⁵⁰³ « C'est toujours une faute, lorsqu'on prétend perfectionner un état social, de commencer par étouffer ses qualités natives », Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art russe*, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰⁴ « Tout enseignement vraiment national doit tendre à les distinguer, à les développer et à leur faire produire tout ce qu'elles peuvent produire », Ibid., p. 259.

beyond explicating and giving recommendations for the Russian arts, points out that in their correspondences, Viollet-le-Duc and Slavophile Viktor Boutowsky (1815-1881) discussed ‘the emergence of a so-called national artistic consciousness in Russia as part of a general trend that encompassed the entire European continent’.⁵⁰⁵ Even though there was still ‘in France, a good number of Frenchmen who refuse their own country the privilege of having created and possessed an original art tied to its genius,’ namely the adherents and friends of the Beaux-Arts, Viollet-le-Duc remained convinced of his work’s greater importance and showed no signs of relenting.⁵⁰⁶

As with the *Entretiens*, Viollet-le-Duc remarked in *L’Art russe* that in the present day, the likes of the Beaux-Arts claimed ‘that art is cosmopolitan, one, and that it is vain to try to restore an autonomy to the diverse expressions of art’; an idea which also reflects a perspective of humanity belonging to a single race, rather than separate races as argued by

⁵⁰⁵ O’Connell, (p. 439).

⁵⁰⁶ « En France, bon nombre de Français refuser à leur propre pays le privilège d'avoir créé et possédé un art original tenant à son génie », Viollet-le-Duc, *L’Art russe*, p. 1.

polygenists such as Viollet-le-Duc and Arthur de Gobineau.⁵⁰⁷ Addressing this cosmopolitan perspective of the arts, which the former equated with the deference to Classical forms so prevalent now across the globe, he cited his rationalist argument, as he had done from the beginning of his career.

Whether they be transported to London, Berlin, Paris, or St. Petersburg, the imitations of Greek or Roman temples ‘seem not only displaced, but they clash with the mores, the habits, and the traditions of the populations’ amid which they are raised.⁵⁰⁸ As evidenced by previous chapters of this thesis, *L’Art russe*, was not the first text in which Viollet-le-Duc advocated for the use of his rationalist principle on an international scale, however it did constitute the first overt example of his censuring the use of Classical architectural styles outside of France, and to more than just Russia, no less. By transposing his critiques of Classical architecture onto Russia, Viollet-le-Duc was highlighting a pattern which he portrayed as fatal to national arts around the world.

He asserted that the adoption of Classical architectural styles in Russia under Peter the Great (1672-1725), comparable to Louis XIV in many

⁵⁰⁷ « Que l’art est cosmopolite, un, et qu’il est vain de tenter de rendre aux expressions diverses de l’art une autonomie », Ibid., p. 257.

⁵⁰⁸ « Semblent non-seulement déplacées, mais jurent avec les mœurs, les habitudes et les traditions des populations », Ibid., p. 258.

respects, had played a major role in stifling the development of Russian national unity, and by extension, national art. This position was also held by the Slavophiles, for whom 'Petrine culture, as embodied by the classicising architecture of Peter the Great's eponymous capital, was a western virus that had contaminated the pure body of Russia'.⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, in echoing his view of Louis XIV's suppression of French national arts, Viollet-le-Duc claimed that those native to Russia should never have been 'replaced by pastiches borrowed from Italy, from France, and from Germany'.⁵¹⁰ He conceded that it was all well and good for Russia to go in search of industrial and commercial advancements that it was sorely missing at the time.⁵¹¹ However, 'to substitute the expressions of national genius' and to imitate the arts belonging to the French, the Italians, the Dutch, and the Germans, 'was to strike the native productions of the Russian people with impotence for a long time.'⁵¹² As demonstrated by O'Connell, while the Slavophiles rejoiced in Viollet-le-Duc's comments regarding the use of Western arts in Russia,

⁵⁰⁹ O'Connell, (p. 436).

⁵¹⁰ « Remplacé par des pastiches empruntés à l'Italie, à la France, à l'Allemagne », Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art russe*, p. 2.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵¹² « Substituer aux expressions du génie national », « c'était frapper pour longtemps d'impuissance les productions natives du peuple russe,' Ibid.

the Westernisers were wholly disapproving; a testament to the fact that the cosmopolitan spirit inherent in Classical artistic institutions was at odds with the idea of humanity being separated by divisions of nationality.⁵¹³ It may be worth recalling that Quatremère de Quincy and the Beaux-Arts did not even believe France possessed a national architecture, let alone that it should revive it, as was considered in chapter one.

Viollet-le-Duc emphasized that to raise the Classical arts as an example to be followed was, for Russia, ‘to submit to a state of inferiority in all that relates to art; it was to render itself tributary’ to those civilisations from which it limited itself to borrowing.⁵¹⁴ This idea was something that Viollet-le-Duc often applied to the reign of Louis XIV, who he faulted for making the French arts dependent on Rome, and on ‘a sort of aristocratic corporation devoted to the monarchy’.⁵¹⁵ He claimed that ‘it is from below,’ by virtue of ‘popular sentiment or instinct’ that the powerful regenerative force of national arts surge, and that pastiche is only ever ‘the product of an

⁵¹³ O’Connell, (p. 446).

⁵¹⁴ « Soumettre à un état d’infériorité pour tout ce qui relève de l’art; c’était se rendre tributaire », Viollet-le-Duc, *L’Art russe*, p. 3.

⁵¹⁵ « Une sorte de corporation aristocratique dévouée à la monarchie », Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’un dessinateur*, p. 246.

elite'.⁵¹⁶ As put by O'Connell, Viollet-le-Duc 'exhorted Russian architects to design rationally,' by which he meant in accordance with their own native customs and styles, as opposed to the examples of the Classical world imported and imposed upon them by the likes of Peter I.⁵¹⁷ It is worth noting that the reason Viollet-le-Duc did not mention Eclecticism in Russian architecture was because, unlike in France where the Classical styles had gradually encroached upon the Gothic, 'Russian art, which was walking its path, was briskly set aside and was replaced' by the likes of Peter I the Great and his westernising descendants at a significant speed and scale; the process occurred in a manner very different from that which took place in France.⁵¹⁸ That said, what Viollet-le-Duc did not vocalise with regard to the idea of Eclecticism in architecture, his advice for Russian national architects more than expressed.

The recommendations for ascertaining and cultivating national architecture given by Viollet-le-Duc in *L'Art russe* featured a greater degree of subjectivity and ambiguity than had been presented in his prior works.

⁵¹⁶ « C'est d'en bas », « le sentiment ou l'instinct populaire », « le produit d'une élite », Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art russe*, p. 127.

⁵¹⁷ O'Connell, (p. 441).

⁵¹⁸ « L'art russe, qui marchait dans sa voie, a été brusquement mis de côté et a été remplacé », Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art russe*, p. 2.

Of note, he urged that Russian architecture had to correspond to the Russian nation and its place in the world, and that those responsible for effecting this new direction had a responsibility to choose among the elements of their architectural history, ‘those which come from the purest, the most original sources, those most conformed to the national genius; the structures which agree best with the habits, the traditions, the materials, and the nature of the climate or local resources’.⁵¹⁹ While he did not eschew his rationalist theory, he mingled it with artistic liberty in a way he had not expressed before. What is especially strange about this passage is that it contradicts his claim elsewhere in the book that a national art ‘is never the product of chance, the consequence of a capricious choice between diverse elements, but instead, the logical result of certain conditions, some purely physical, others moral’.⁵²⁰ Furthermore, he argued that ‘an art is a highly complex product of diverse elements, among which dominate the particular

⁵¹⁹ « Ceux qui proviennent des sources les plus pures, les plus originales, les plus conformes au génie national ; les structures qui s’accordent le mieux avec les habitudes, les traditions, les matériaux, la nature du climat ou les ressources locales », Ibid., p. 178.

⁵²⁰ « N’est jamais le produit du hasard, la conséquence d’un choix capricieux entre des éléments divers, mais bien, le résultat logique de certaines conditions, les unes purement physiques, les autres morale », Ibid., p. 149.

aptitude to each race'.⁵²¹ Thus, Viollet-le-Duc simultaneously conveyed that national architecture was something that could and could not be chosen. This duality of narratives here bears a pointed resemblance to what the likes of Leclercq de la Prairie identified in the *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, as considered in chapter two, regarding Viollet-le-Duc's presentation of alternate historical perspectives in the same text; with an objective one being portrayed by accurate depictions of historic works, and a subjective one featuring nebulous theories meant to influence the reader of personal beliefs.

What Viollet-le-Duc essentially expressed in *L'Art russe* is that the restoration of a national architecture constituted a subjective decision-making process. It was not so much akin to an archaeological discovery, as he often claimed, but a curation of archaeological discoveries pieced together in a way that best conformed to a desired ideal. This suggests that notions about the relation between architecture and race, mores, religion, climate, and natural resources were but a veil, a disguise to hide the true subjectivity of his methodology and simultaneously lend to them an air of scientific reality. It should be noted in that regard, moreover, that the

⁵²¹ « Un art est un produit très-complexe d'éléments divers, parmi lesquels domine l'aptitude particulière à chaque race », Ibid., p. 104.

discoveries pertaining to Russian architecture that Viollet-le-Duc made were not as scientific as he led the readers to believe. Réau related that ‘the science of Viollet-le-Duc does not rest on a direct knowledge of monuments. He had never been to Russia and he limited himself to interpreting documents and drawings made available to him by his correspondents in Moscow’.⁵²² Additionally, while O’Connell notes that the Slavophiles approached Viollet-le-Duc in the first place, Réau underlined that it was the latter who ‘solicited them’ for certain materials in order ‘to justify a preconceived theory,’ further underlining the notions that his engagement with history was filtered according to the message he sought to inculcate in his writings, and that his rationalist theory was a means of justifying his reconstruction of the past after the fact.⁵²³ As put by Aron Vinegar, Viollet-le-Duc’s methodology ‘was not about reclamation or revival, but an act of critical imagination’; the restoration of the real past was never his primary concern.⁵²⁴ Simply put, Viollet-le-Duc advised Russian

⁵²² « La science de Viollet-le-Duc ne repose pas sur une connaissance directe des monuments. Il n’a jamais été en Russie et il se borne à interpréter des documents et des dessins mis à sa disposition par ses correspondants de Moscou », Réau, p. 4.

⁵²³ « Il les sollicite », « pour justifier une thèse préconçue », Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Vinegar, p. 52.

nationalist architects to adopt an idealist approach to restoration; with rational considerations functioning rather as the boundaries than the foundation itself.

One need but consider his work on the church of Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption de Simorre (Fig. 6.4) between 1844 and 1858 to perceive the importance which he gave to achieving an ideal at the expense of historical reality. As related by the Société française pour la conservation des monuments historiques in 1970, 'rather than showcasing an old system anew,' Viollet-le-Duc's restorations 'substituted the original aspect of the edifice for a too-perfect theoretical system'.⁵²⁵ Another good example is the cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption de Clermont-Ferrand (Fig. 6.5), whose restoration was conducted according to Viollet-le-Duc's plans by his student, Anatole Baudot (1834-1915), between 1866 and 1884.⁵²⁶ In 'Les Principes de la Conservation des Monuments Historiques : Evolution des Doctrines,' published in 1935, Paul Léon stated that Viollet-le-Duc chose 'to invent a Gothic façade, a work of pure imagination,' and 'instead of

⁵²⁵ « Plutôt que de remettre en valeur un système ancien », « substitué à un aspect originel de l'édifice un système théorique trop parfait », Hélène Couzy, 'Simorre,' *Congrès archéologique de France*, 128 (1970), pp. 308-319 (p. 316).

⁵²⁶ Léon, pp. 17-52.

reproducing that which had surely existed, he sought to produce that which should have existed'; mirroring the recommendations he offered the Russian architects in *L'Art russe*.⁵²⁷

Regarding this genre of restoration, it is interesting to note how contemporary art critic William Morris (1834-1896) warned that those 'professing to bring back a building to the best time of its history, have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what contemptible,' and that 'the very nature of their task compels them to destroy something and to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done'.⁵²⁸ Morris' perspective was highly conservative, even by British standards, but it highlighted that by its definition, the sort of purist or idealist restoration practiced and advocated by Viollet-le-Duc necessarily involved a degree of subjectivity and imagination in which his peers refused to indulge. As was mentioned in the first chapter, Merimée advised the architects working with the commission for historic monuments to avoid fantastical restorations at all

⁵²⁷ « Inventer une façade gothique, œuvre de pure imagination », « au lieu de reproduire ce qui avait surement existe, il cherchait à produire ce qui aurait dû exister », Ibid., (p. 40).

⁵²⁸ 'The SPAB Manifesto'.

costs.⁵²⁹ He believed, much like Morris, that ‘the traces of the past have a holy character,’ and that there was no greater desecration than to pretend to restore a piece of history by destroying its tangible connection to the past; a transgression of which his dear friend and one-time pupil Viollet-le-Duc was all too guilty of committing and, as demonstrated in this thesis, determined to justify.⁵³⁰

The purpose of the *L'Art russe*, as has been shown, was ostensibly to identify a pro-Slavic Russian architectural framework, yet it is difficult to deny that Viollet-le-Duc wished for the text to have a broader significance, a broader application rather. In it, he argued for the necessity of exchanging Classical importations for native arts, not merely in Russia or France, but in accordance with universal rational principle. He maintained, as he had done before, that a nation's architecture should be ‘in perfect concordance’ with, and ‘the exact imprint’ of its unique civilisation, something for which a borrowing of Greek and Roman styles did not allow.⁵³¹ It is reasonable to interpret that by demonstrating how even an artistic tradition as mysterious and culturally diverse as that of Russia, could be distilled into a unified,

⁵²⁹ Xavier Darcos.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ « En concordance parfaite », « l’empreinte exacte », Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art russe*, p. 105.

albeit artificial, national style, Viollet-le-Duc intended for those outside of Russia, who were possessed of nationalist sentiment, to see what was in reach. Indeed, the fact that he had been approached by Russian nationalists in the first place suggests that he had a wider nationalist audience, among whom were those seeking to replicate what he had done with French national architecture. Additionally, unlike in his previous works where he stressed national architecture should be rational, he argued in *L'Art russe* that it should also be ideal, something which he had only intimated before. This undermined the Eclecticist methodology by suggesting that a simple reconstitution of the past as it existed did not cater for the realisation of a nation's self-image in its truest form.

Conclusion

By the diverse and extensive labours of his career, Viollet-le-Duc gained for himself ‘a world-wide reputation’ as a ‘great authority in the domain of the arts’ which survives him to this day.⁵³² While he mostly distinguished himself among his contemporaries as a capable architect and unparalleled draughtsman, his ‘ingenious and savant’ writings made known his many spheres of interest and expertise, and lead to his being called ‘an intellectual king among men’.⁵³³ A claim regarding his myriad activities which has only rarely been made, however, and tentatively or partially at that, concerns his being a nationalist who authored works of nationalist propaganda bearing upon architecture; one which this thesis has substantiated by considering a broad sample of his publications. It has also

⁵³² [Anon.], ‘The Late Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc,’ (p. 1068); « Grande autorité dans le domaine des arts », [Anon.], ‘Mémoire sur l’architecture en Auvergne,’ *Mémoires de l’académie des sciences belles-lettres et arts de Clermont-Ferrand*, 9 (1867), pp. 273-337 (p. 280).

⁵³³ « Ingénieux et savant », Jean Coste-Reboulh, ‘Viollet-le-Duc,’ *Mémoires de la Société des arts et des sciences de Carcassonne*, 4 (1879), p. 221-225. (p. 222); Charles Wethered, ‘A notice of his works in connection with the historical monuments of France,’ in *On Restoration* by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (Sampson Low, Marston Low, & Searle, 1875), pp. 75-110 (p. 96).

shown that these writings supported his purist approach to the restoration of historic monuments which contrasted radically with the Eclectic methodology espoused and adopted by his peers.

The analysis of Viollet-le-Duc's writings in this thesis has established that among his nationalist arguments, the most prominent was his belief that the French alone could claim the Gothic as their national architecture and should be proud to do so. He argued that the Gothic could and should be designated the French national architecture since it was the only construction system in France whose form satisfied a rational relationship to the functions necessitated by the national context. This stance, informed by nascent archaeological understanding, derogated the mixture of architectural styles and demanded that the elements of Classical architecture and its descendants be purged from Gothic monuments or transfigured to harmonise with them. Viollet-le-Duc claimed that as the embodiment of a new nation formed in the twelfth century from a unified racial, spiritual, and socio-political entity, it was not only possible, but necessary to distinguish and sever the Gothic from anterior and posterior styles. Furthermore, he stressed that members of a Gothic edifice not only satisfied function with form but were subordinated to a place and purpose within a greater scheme. This structurality supported a purist approach by intimating that the value of Gothic monuments depended on their stylistic integrity. Using the principle of scientific racism which played a central role

in nineteenth-century nationalist narratives, as well as contemporary ideas in evolutionary biology, Viollet-le-Duc argued that all architecture originated from rational principles. The works of Arthur de Gobineau and Georges Cuvier were particularly instrumental in his intimation of the scientific and universal nature of his rationalist doctrine. The latter, coupled with his structuralist portrayal of the Gothic, justified a purist restoration methodology by suggesting that a Gothic monument could be reconstituted as an integral whole from but fragments, and that it would in fact be deprived of its value by remaining in a composite state which clashed with its sociopolitical and geoclimatic context.

The findings of this thesis also demonstrate that in echoing contemporary notions of national and racial inequality, Viollet-le-Duc declared the pre-eminence of the French, especially compared with the Italians, whose Eclectic and chimeric architecture from the medieval to modern periods reflected their political disunion and lacking national identity. Rather than fundamentally altering the Gothic, as claimed by the Eclecticists, Viollet-le-Duc argued that the incorporation of Italian architecture into France during and since the Renaissance was wholly superficial, causing a dissonance between the functional substance and formal appearance of their native construction system. Viollet-le-Duc intimated that this suppression of French national architecture, begun by Louis XIV and perpetuated by the Beaux-Arts, as exemplified by trends in

nineteenth-century architectural education and practice, had the result of incapacitating French arts, industry, sociopolitical cohesion, and nationality identity; ultimately paving the way for France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war between 1870 and 1871. This challenged the Eclectic approach to restoration by suggesting that it was causally linked to national degeneration and international devaluation. While Viollet-le-Duc originally claimed that rationality alone was the lynchpin for realising or revitalising national architecture, he increasingly urged that it should also conform to a nation's vision of its ideal self, as a way of driving it toward progress. This notion undermined the Eclecticist approach by suggesting that it encapsulated a composite shadow of the past, and did not represent what a nation wished for itself to be or become, a quality which he implied was vital to the worth national architecture. He stressed that populations all over Europe and indeed the modern world, inspired by modern scientific and philosophical tendencies for understanding the nature of the world and the self, were eager to throw off the yoke of Classical architecture and rediscover, or invent, a pure national architecture that celebrated, rather than suppressed or denigrated their unique national genius.

This thesis has drawn out how Viollet-le-Duc's unorthodox ideas and practices, notably his adoption of a purist approach to historic architectural restoration, put him at odds with his Eclecticist colleagues Vaudoyer and Reynaud, in addition to many other of his contemporaries within France

and abroad who represented mainstream schools of restoration thought.⁵³⁴ However, his early successes with the Sainte-Chapelle and the Abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay among others, notwithstanding his ever-increasing academic and political influence under the Second French Empire, afforded him the privilege of restoring over a hundred of the nation's grandest Gothic monuments; the better part of which 'will be for ever [*sic*] identified' with his name and his myriad written works.⁵³⁵ One of the most significant implications of the findings presented in this thesis is that by subjecting so many of France's medieval monuments to his purist restoration methodology, Viollet-le-Duc intertwined French architectural patrimony, notwithstanding the nation's relation to its cultural and historic identity, with nationalist ideas. It is therefore extremely difficult in the present day, if not impossible, to separate a consideration of France's architectural legacy from these ideas which characterised much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A testament to this notion is the fact that following the fire which broke out at the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris in 2019, the French government decided to affect '*a return to the state of Viollet-le-Duc*,' preserving the fruits of his purist restoration, and his

⁵³⁴ Poisson and Poisson, p. 89; Bressani, p. 198.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., pp. 69-79; Saint-Paul, p. 11; Wethered, (p. 110).

nationalism by extension.⁵³⁶ This decision was made despite initial interest in an Eclectic ‘contemporary architectural gesture,’ and was only supported by 54% of the population.⁵³⁷ Thus, even in 2024 when the restoration of Notre-Dame is to be completed, the interplay between French architectural patrimony and nationalism persists; not to mention the struggle between purist and Eclectic restoration ideologies.

⁵³⁶ « *Un retour à l'état Viollet-le-Duc* », Claire Bommelaer, ‘Notre-Dame : Emmanuel Macron renonce à son “geste architectural contemporain”,’ *Le Figaro*, 9 July 2020 <<https://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/notre-dame-emmanuel-macron-renonce-a-son-geste-architectural-contemporain-20200709>> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

⁵³⁷ « Geste architectural contemporain », ‘Reconstruction contemporaine ou à l’identique? La flèche de Notre-Dame à la pointe des débats,’ *Le Figaro*, 23 April 2019 <<https://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/reconstruction-contemporaine-ou-a-l-identique-la-fleche-de-notre-dame-a-la-pointe-des-debats-20190423>> [Accessed 5 May 2021]; ‘Étude YouGov France Baromètre Le Huff Post/Cnews,’ YouGov, 26-29 April 2019 <[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/blol5v2wx0/R%C3%A9sultats%20YouGov%20pour%20Le%20HuffPost%20\(Actualité%20C3%A9\)%20080%20As_Sent%20290419.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/blol5v2wx0/R%C3%A9sultats%20YouGov%20pour%20Le%20HuffPost%20(Actualité%20C3%A9)%20080%20As_Sent%20290419.pdf)> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

This thesis, however, has but scratched the surface of the icebergs that are such dialogues, not only in France but in a global contemporary context. As comprehensive as it has been in terms of breadth, it has been rather a survey of works which could each easily form the basis of a separate thesis, or indeed theses. There is much room for examining how nationalism penetrated Viollet-le-Duc's life's works, and how he used that nationalism to shape contemporary perceptions in favour of his restoration methodology. Additionally, as outlined in the introduction, there are several works written by Viollet-le-Duc whose inclusion or full consideration was beyond the scope of this thesis, and which could inform the continuing conversation between nationalism and architectural restoration, notwithstanding purism and Eclecticism. Alternatively, there is also worth in investigating the nationalist writings of other Gothicists such as Adolphe-Naopléon Didron, Ferdinand-Marie-Nolasque de Guilhermy, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus, and Félix-Joseph de Verneilh-Puyraseau among others. In chapter one, it was shown that these individuals authored texts which mirrored those of Viollet-le-Duc, yet their contributions to the domain of the arts were much more extensive than was seen in this thesis. As different as their approaches to restoration were, Morris and Viollet-le-Duc both emphasised that the very practice of architectural restoration was invented in the nineteenth century; it was a product of the social, political, artistic, and intellectual

developments of the age.⁵³⁸ This notion itself warrants a much greater investigation into the dialogue that played out between architectural restoration and nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries especially, and which is deeply connected to the present day. Nevertheless, while this thesis has shed light on a greater discourse poised and waiting to be explored in more depth, it has contributed uniquely to the scholarship of Viollet-le-Duc, one of history's most prolific architects and architectural theorists. It has evinced that the preponderance of his literary corpus was designed to inculcate his nationalist ideology, with a view to justifying and disseminating his rationalist doctrine and purist approach to architectural restoration; the fruits of which, as seen with Notre-Dame de Paris in particular, are still being born in the twenty-first century.

⁵³⁸ 'The SPAB Manifesto'; Viollet-le-Duc, 'Restauration,' (p. 14).

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- ‘De la construction des édifices religieux en France depuis le commencement du christianisme jusqu’au XVI^e siècle : Chapitre II,’ *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845), pp. 78-85
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Illustrations



FIG. 0.1. Jean-Baptiste Lassus and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Notre-Dame : Façade occidentale* (1843), watercolour on paper, 91 × 63 cm.

Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.



FIG. 0.2. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *La Cité de Carcassonne : Côté ouest* : *Élévation restaurée : État actuel des fortifications* (1853), watercolour on paper, 63.9 × 99 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.



FIG. 0.3. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Élévation extérieure du château sur la ligne C.D. du fossé* (1858), watercolour on paper, 46.8 × 64.8 cm.

Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.

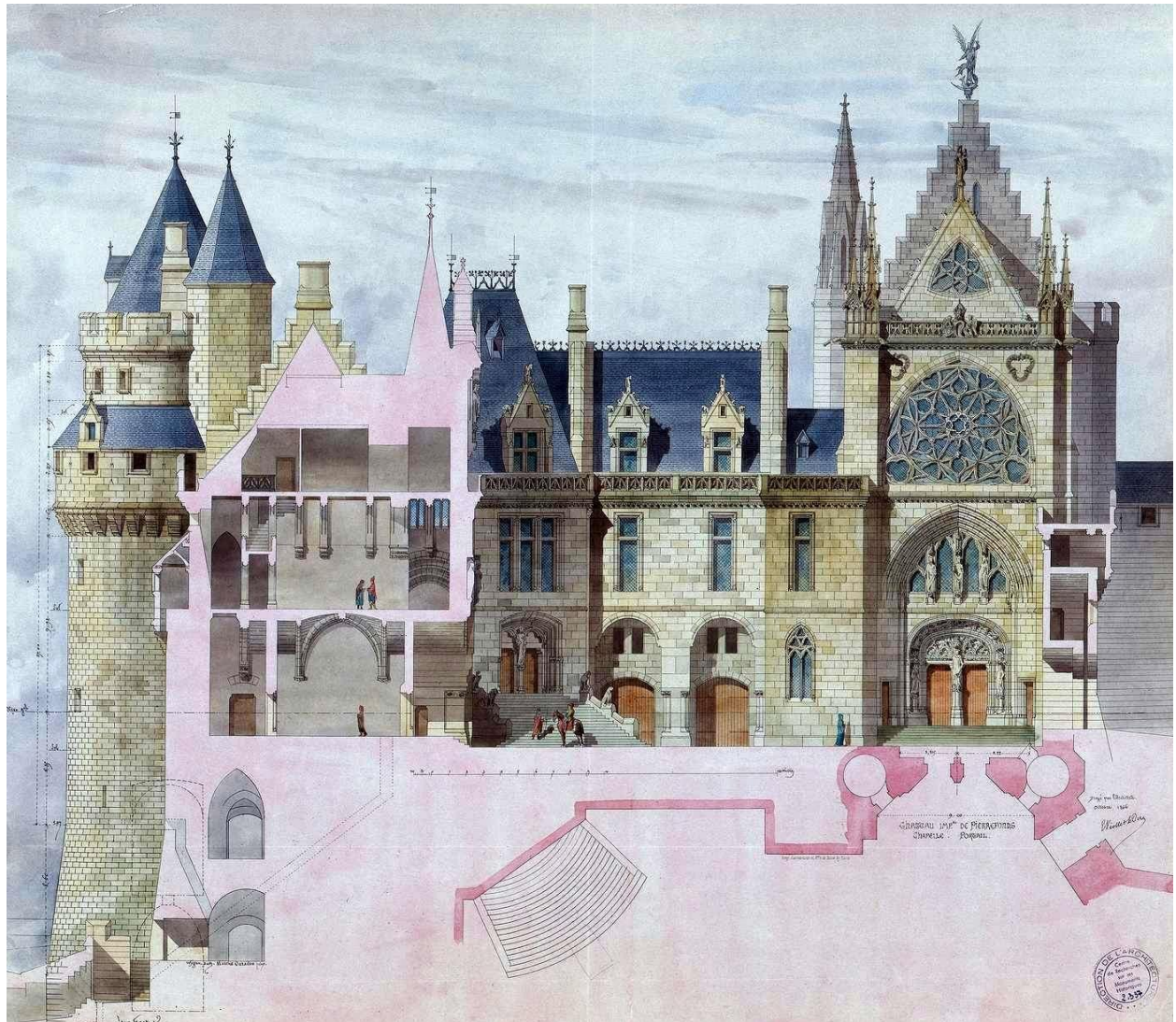


FIG. 0.4. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Château Imperiale de Pierrefonds : Chappelle : Portail* (1866), watercolour on paper, 59.4 × 68.2 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.



FIG. 0.5. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Paris : Sainte-Chapelle : Vue perspective de la face sud-ouest : Projet de restauration* (1841), watercolour and ink on paper, 63.5 × 45.6 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.

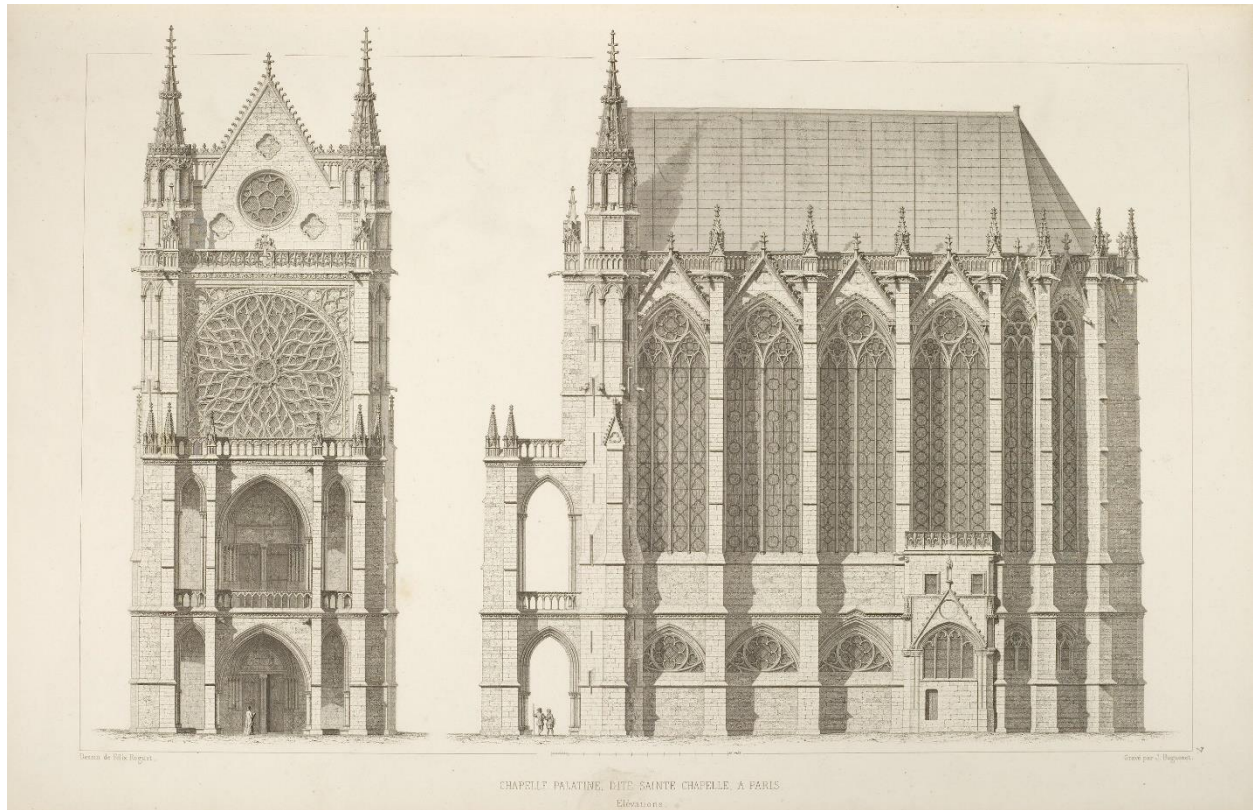


FIG. 0.6. Félix Roguet, 'Chappelle Palatine, dite Sainte Chappelle, Paris : Élevations,' engraved by J. Haguenet, in *L'Architecture du V^{me} au XVII^{me} siècle et les arts qui en dependent : La Sculpture, la peinture murale, la peinture sur verre, la mosaïque, la ferronnerie, etc.* [Atlas] by Jules Gailhabaud (Gide, 1858).

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FIG. 0.7. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Vézelay : Église de la Madeleine* : *Elévation de la façade ouest* (1840), watercolour on paper, 47.5 × 34 cm.

Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.



FIG. 0.8. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Porche des catéchumènes : Porte donnant entrée dans la nef* (1840), watercolour on paper, 52.9 × 42.3 cm.

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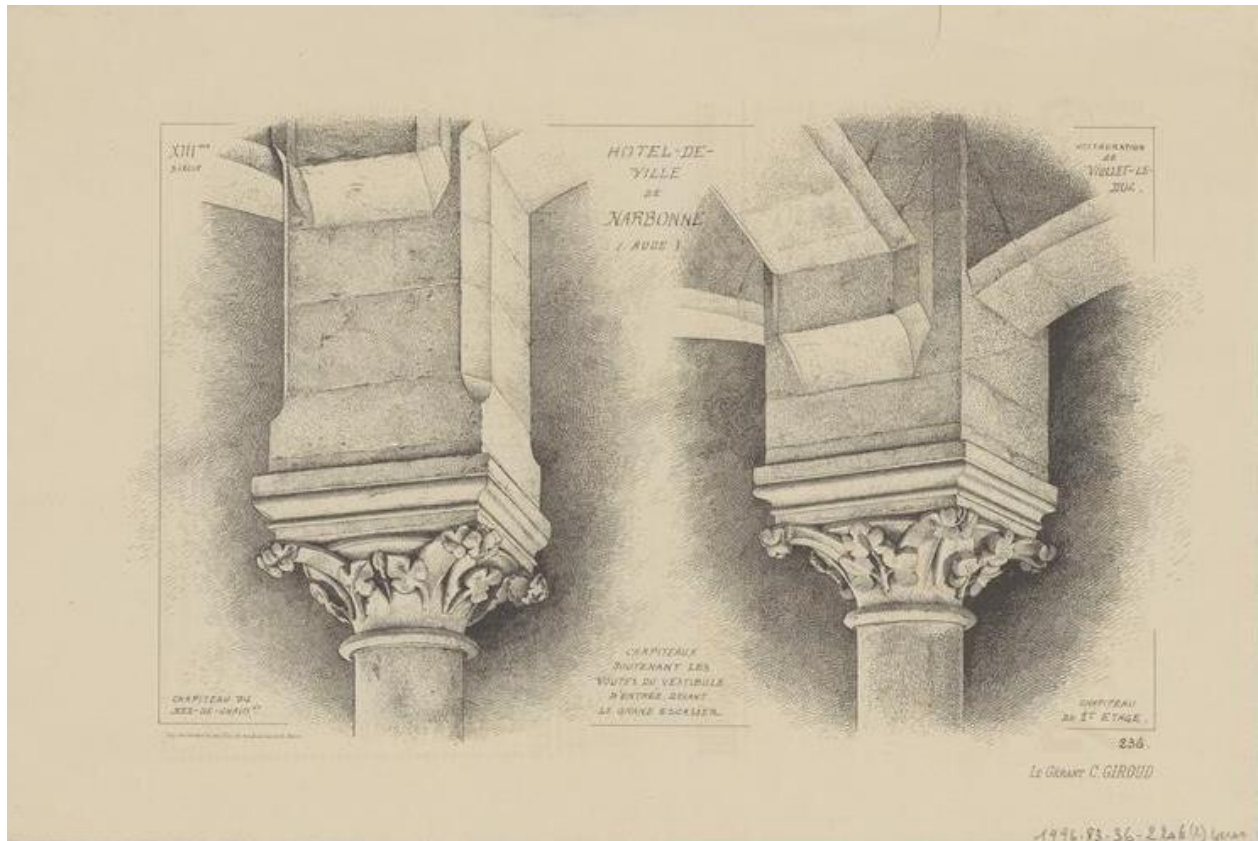


FIG. 0.9. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Hôtel de ville de Narbonne (Aude)* : *Chapiteaux soutenant les voûtes du vestibule d'entrée devant le grand escalier* (c. 1842), print on paper, 33 × 22 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.

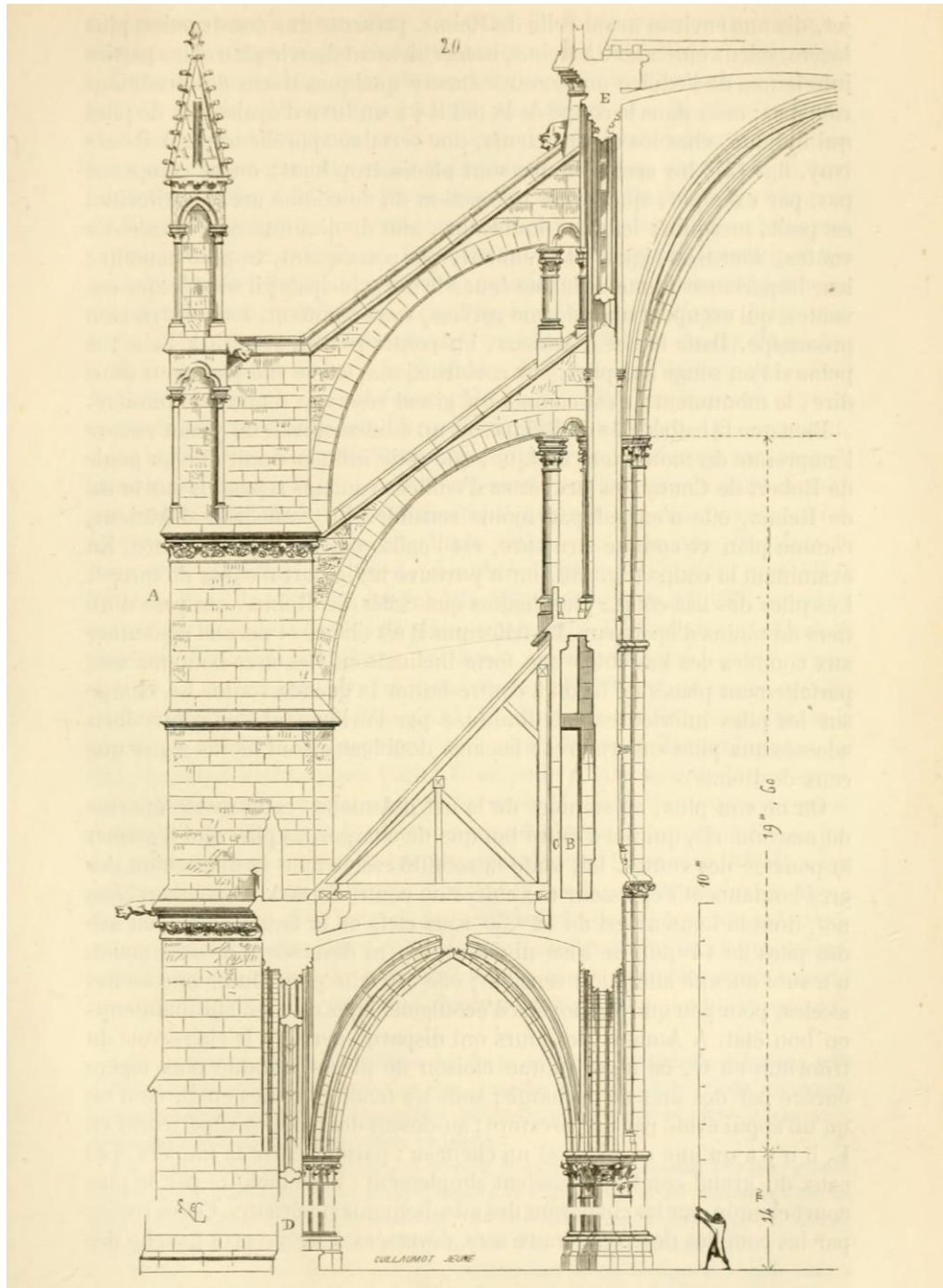


FIG. 0.10. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Transverse section of the cathedral of Notre-Dame d'Amiens], engraved by E. Guillaumot, in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, 9 vols (Bance & Morel, 1859), II.

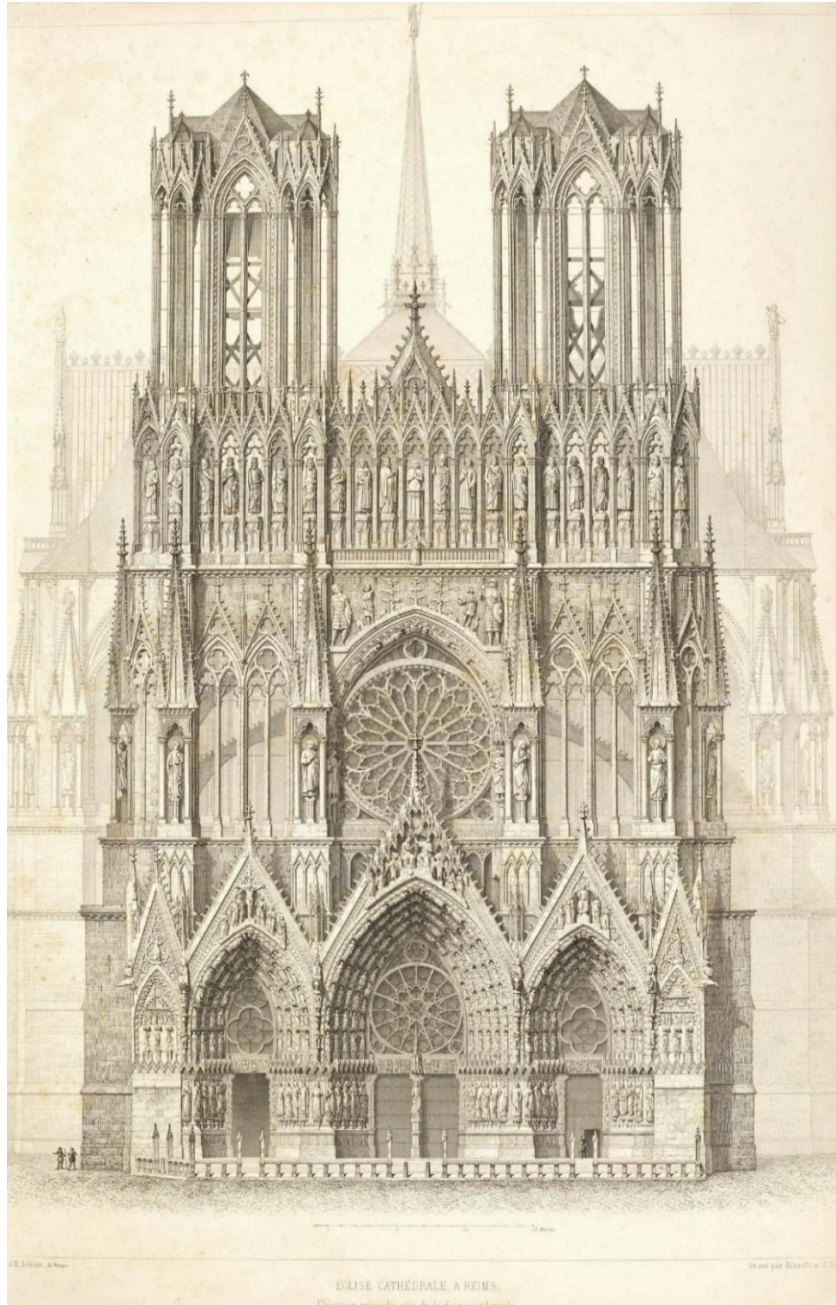


FIG. 0.11. E. Leblan, 'Église cathédrale, a Reims : Élevation prise du côté de la face occidentale,' engraved by Ribault and J. Sulpis, in *L'Architecture du V^{me} au XVII^{me} siècle et les arts qui en dependent : La Sculpture, la peinture murale, la peinture sur verre, la mosaïque, la ferronnerie, etc.* [Atlas] by Jules Gailhabaud (Gide, 1858). © Heidelberg University Library.

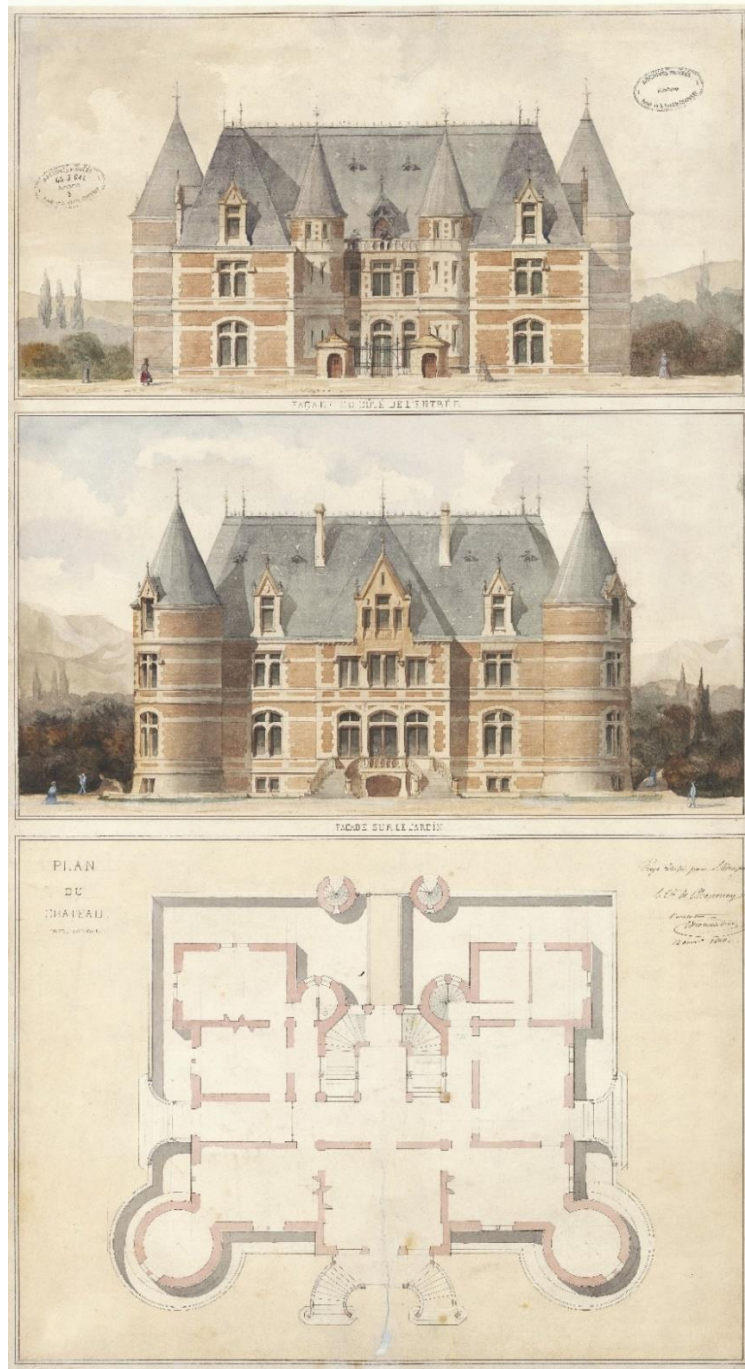


FIG. 0.12. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Castle of La Flachère] *Façades nord et sud, avec plans au sol* (1862), watercolour on paper, [dimensions unspecified]. Archives du département du Rhône et de la métropole de Lyon.

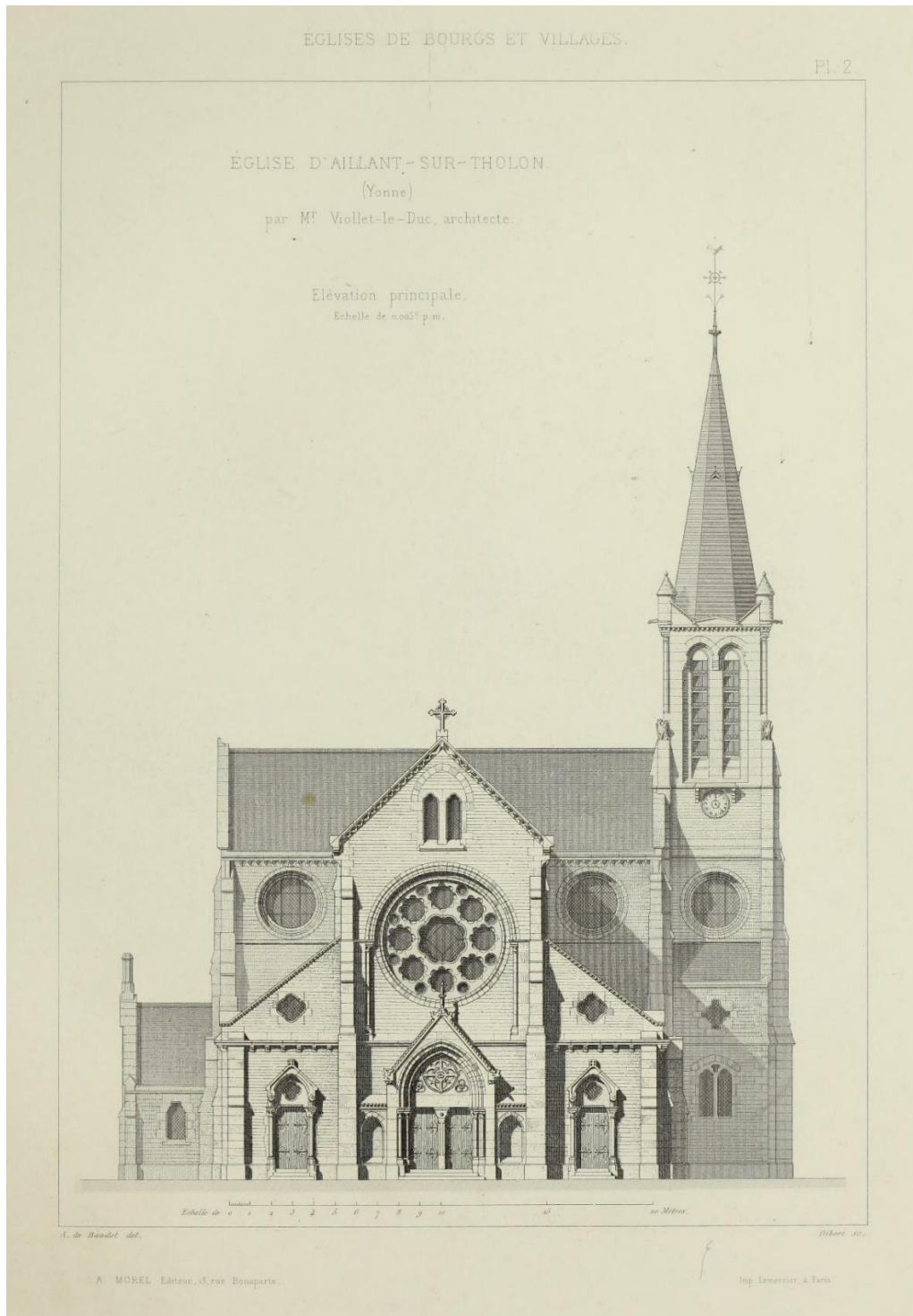


FIG. 0.13. Anatole de Baudot, 'Église d'Aillant-sur-Tholon (Yonne) par M^r Viollet-le-Duc, architecte,' engraved by Gibert, in *Eglises de bourgs et villages*, 2 vols, (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1867), 1. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

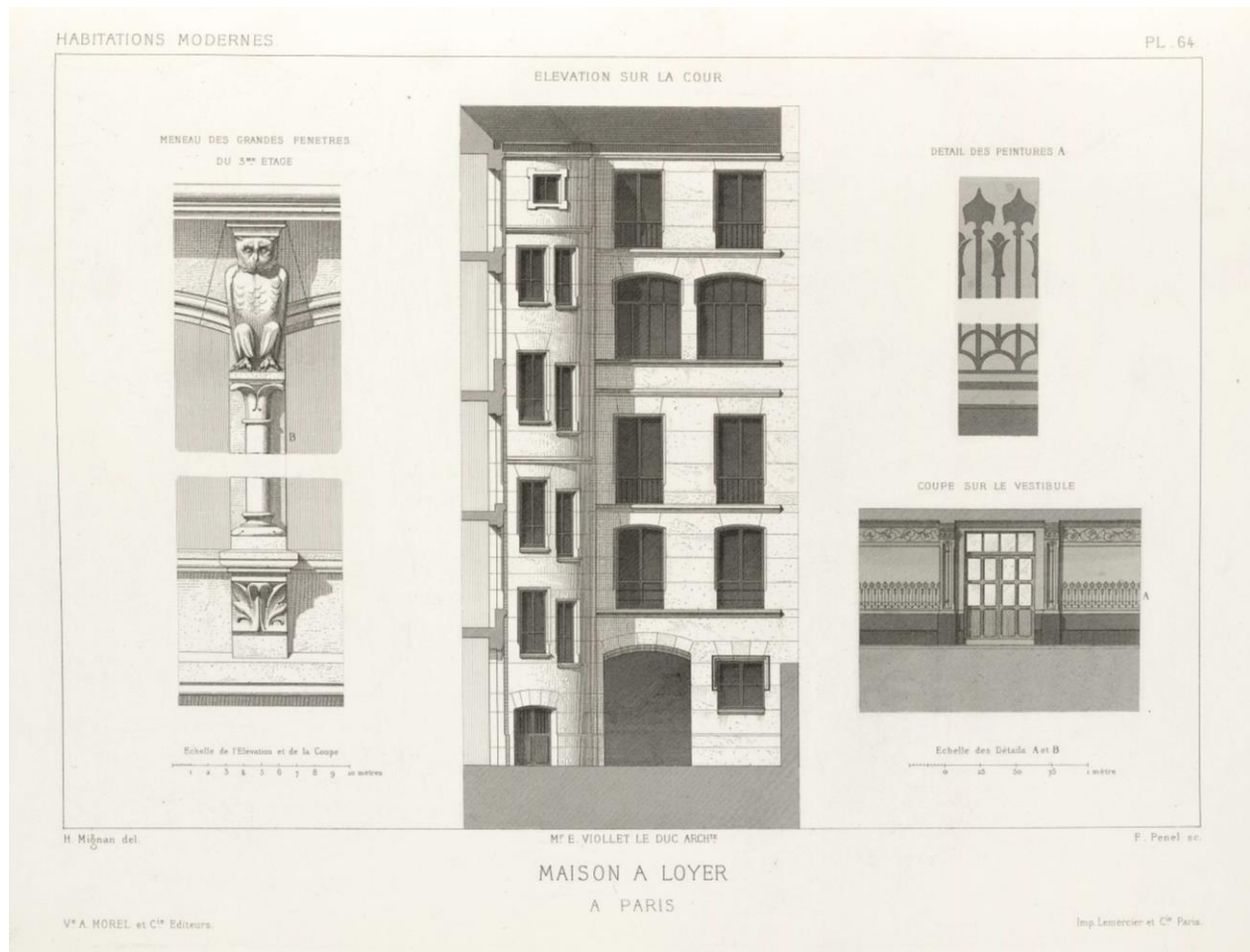


FIG. 0.14. H. Mignan, 'Maison à loyer à paris : Élevation sur la cour,' engraved by F. Penel, in *Habitations modernes* by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Félix Narjoux, 2 vols (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1877), II. Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid.

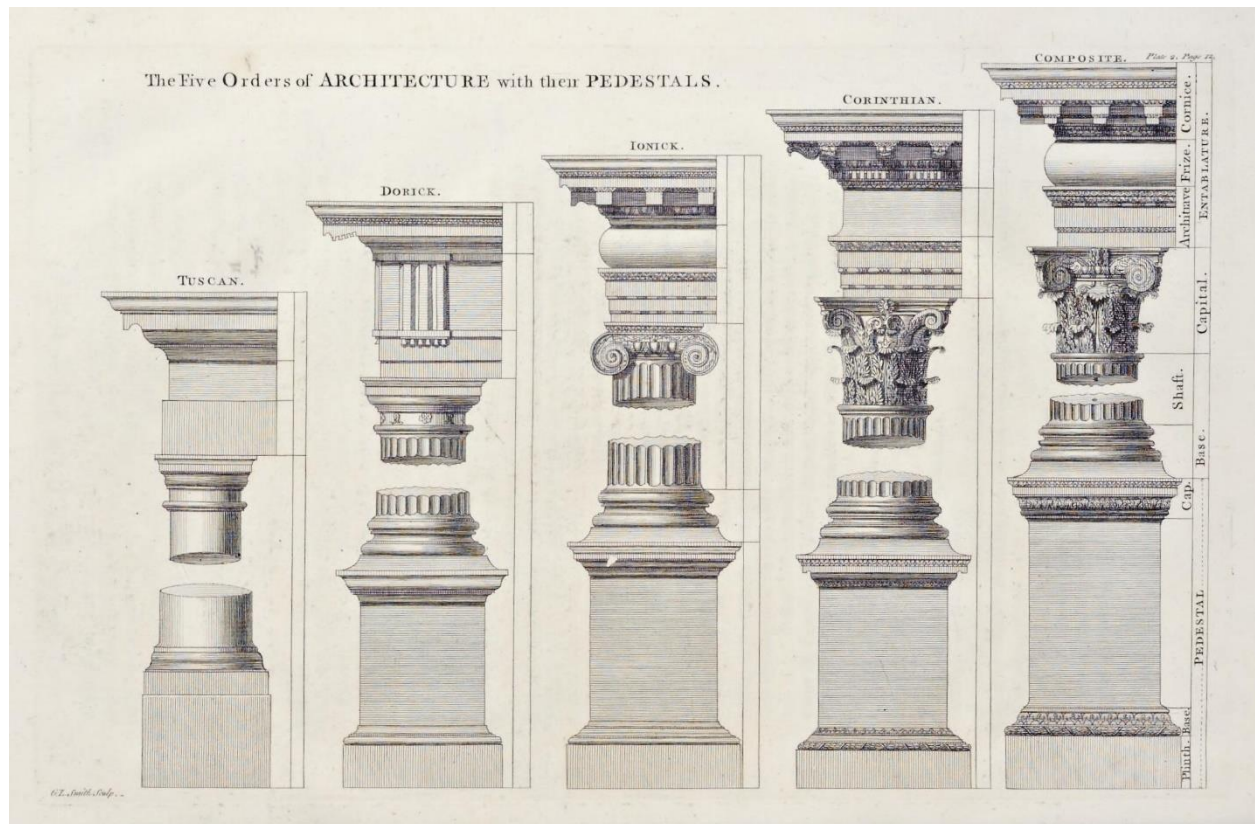


FIG. 0.15. Isaac Ware, ‘The Five Orders of Architecture with their Pedestals,’ engraved by G. L. Smith, in *A Complete Body of Architecture: Adorned with Plans and Elevations* (n. pub., 1756). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 0.16. Leo von Klenze, *Ideale Ansicht der Akropolis und des Areopag in Athen* (1846), oil on canvas, 102.8 × 147.7 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich.



FIG. 0.17. Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Interior of the Pantheon, Rome* (c. 1734), oil on canvas, 128 × 99 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

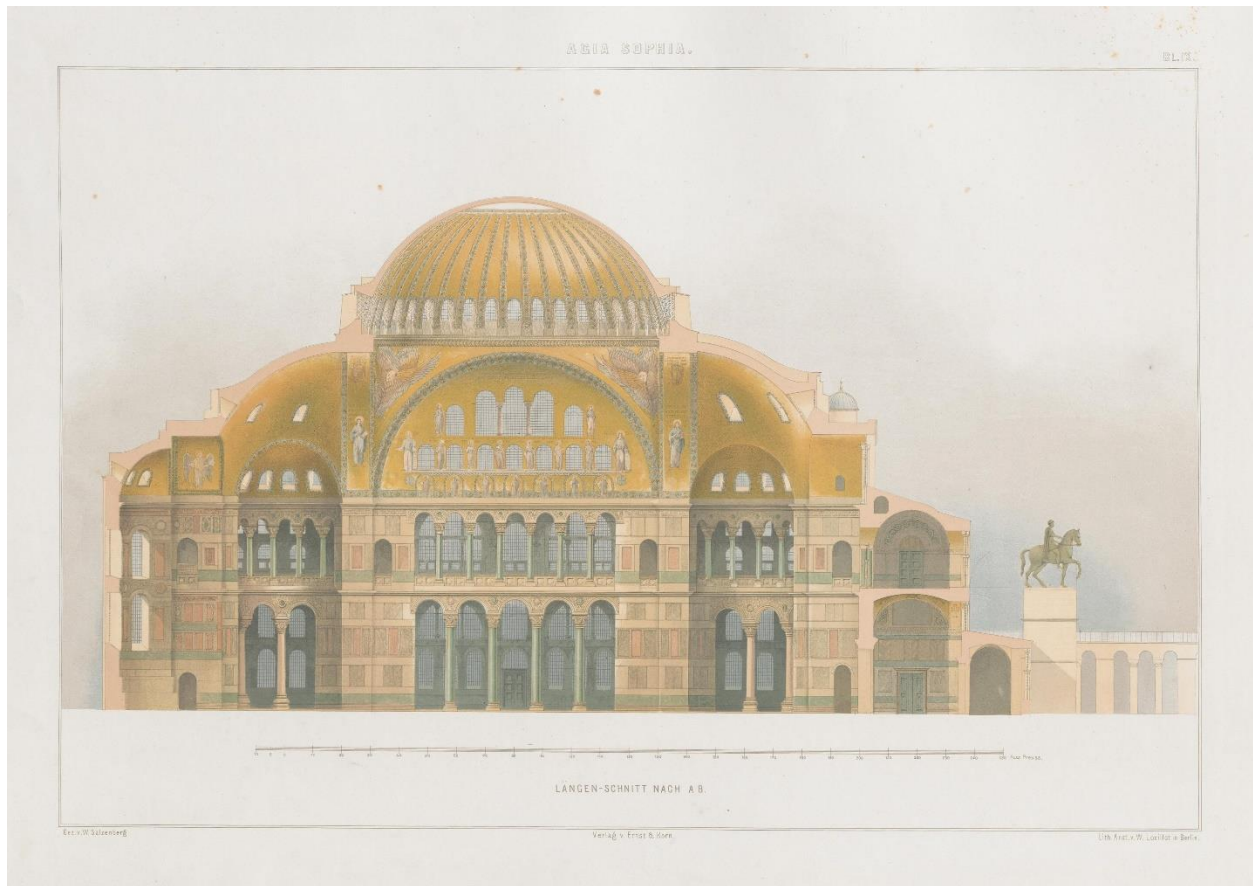


FIG. 0.18. Wilhelm Salzenberg, 'Agia Sophia: Längen-Schnitt nach A B,' lithographed by W. Loeillot, in *Alt-Christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinopel vom V. bis XII. Jahrhundert* (Ernst & Korn, 1854). © Heidelberg University Library.



0.19. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc *S^t Saturnin [Sernin] de Toulouse : Façade occidentale : État restaurée* (1846), 63.6 × 97.5 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.

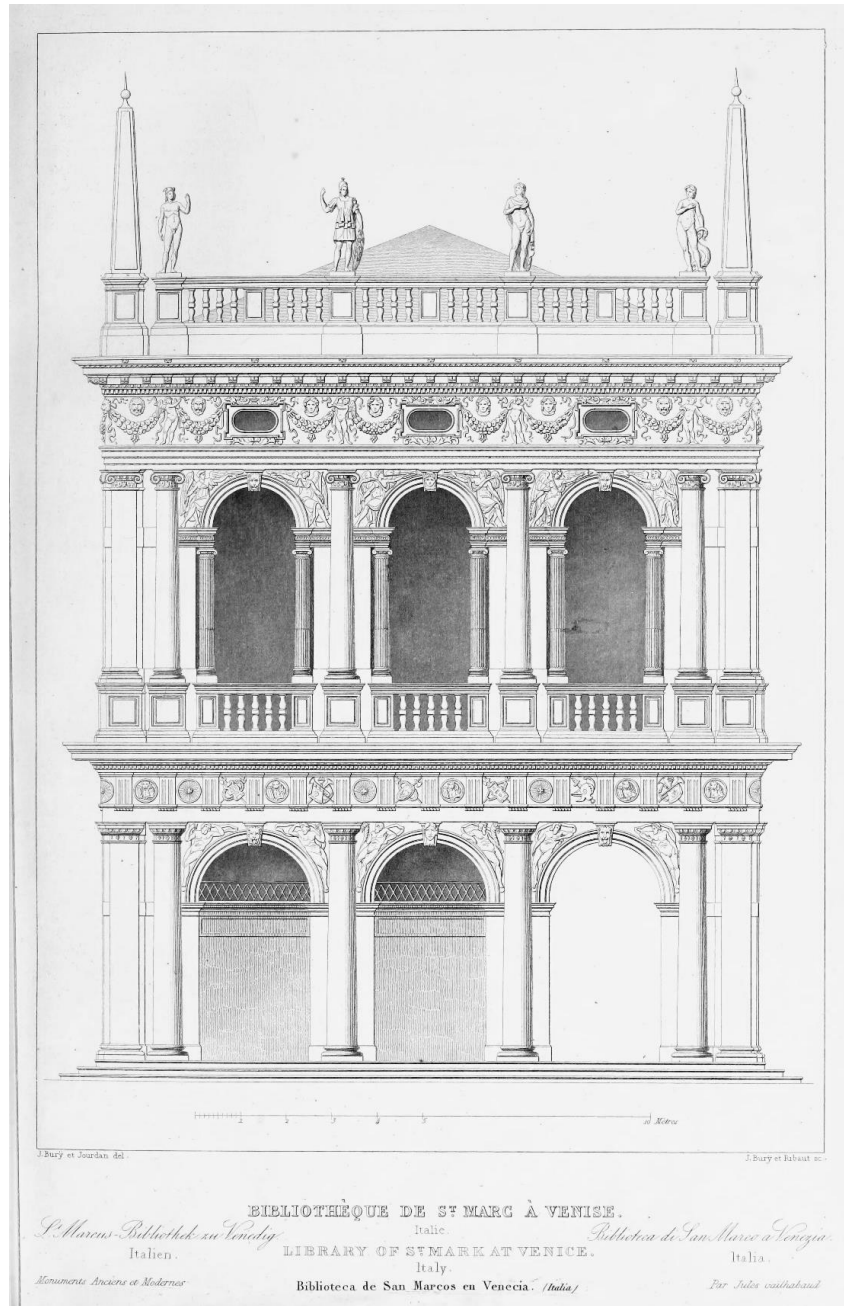


FIG. 0.20. J. Bury and Jourdan, 'Bibliothèque de St Marc à Venise,' engraved by J. Bury and Ribaut, in *Monuments anciens et modernes : collection formant une histoire de l'architecture des différents peuples à toutes les époques* by Jules Gailhabaud, 4 vols (Firmin Didot Frères, Fils, 1870), IV. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 0.21. Francesco Bufalini, 'Frons et facies Basilicae Vaticanae sev Templi Sancti Petri,' engraved by Gio Colin, in *Insignium Romae templorum prospectus exteriores interioresque, a celebrioribus architectis inventi : Nunc tandem suis cum plantis ac mensuris* by Carlo Maderno (Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi, c. 1660). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 0.22. Salomon Kleiner, *Die Kirche St. Caroli Borromaei* (c. 1720), engraved by Hieronymus Sperling, print on paper, 22.4 × 33.5 cm. The Princely Collections, Vienna.



FIG. 0.23. Anonymous after Jacques Rigaud, *Le château de Versailles, cour de la chapelle* (c. 1725), oil on canvas, 105 × 199.5 cm. Collections du Château et du domaine national de Versailles, Versailles. © RMN-GP (Château de Versailles) / © Gérard Blot.

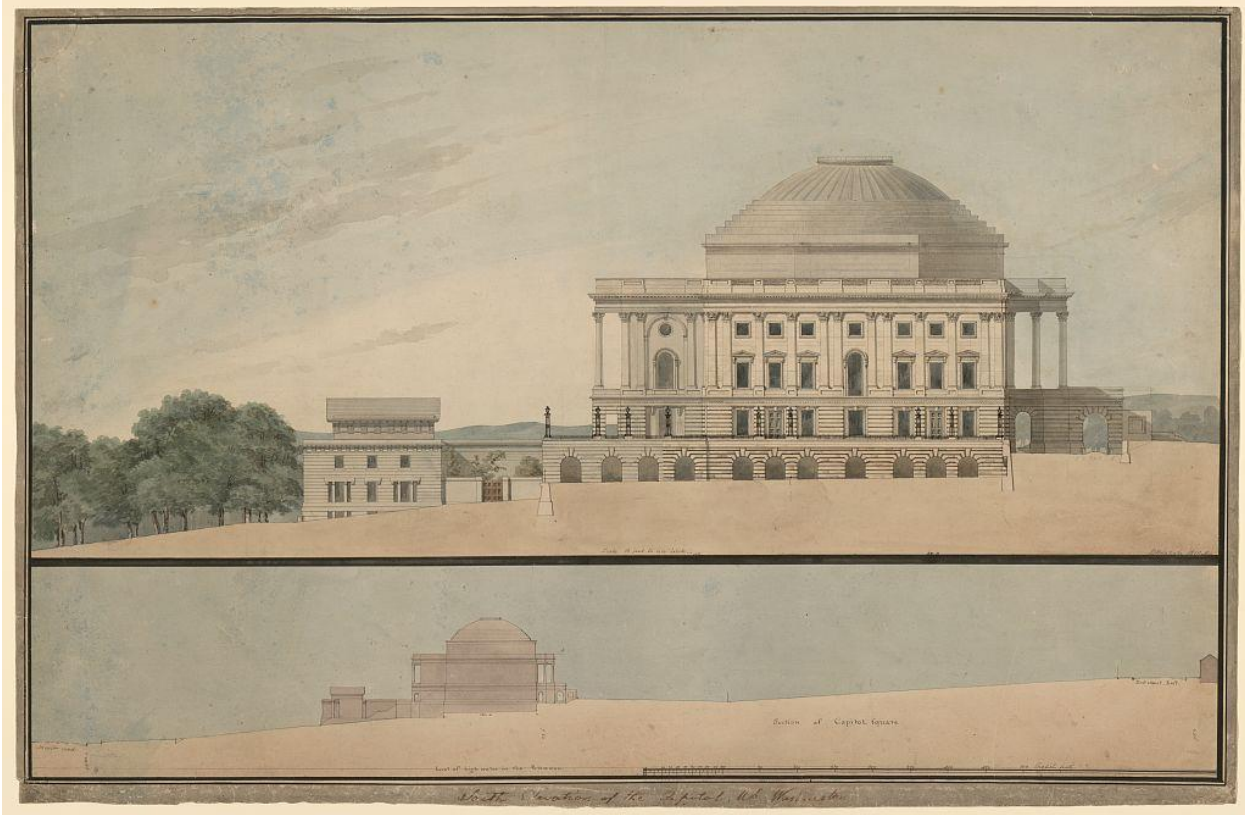


FIG. 0.24. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *South Elevation of the Capitol. U.S. Washington* (1810-1811), watercolour and ink on paper, 48.8 × 75.8 cm. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.



FIG. 0.25. Leo von Klenze, *Die Propyläen auf dem Münchner Königsplatz* (1848), oil on canvas, 87.5 × 130.2 cm. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich.



FIG. 0.27. Félix Duban, *Projet de polychromie pour la cour vitrée de l'École des Beaux-Arts* (1870), watercolour on paper, 62.5 × 31 cm. Galerie La Nouvelle Athènes, Paris.



FIG. 0.28. Louis Larger, *Exposition universelle internationale de 1900 : Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées : Motif centrale sur la nouvelle avenue* (1900), print on paper, 41 × 55.5 cm. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

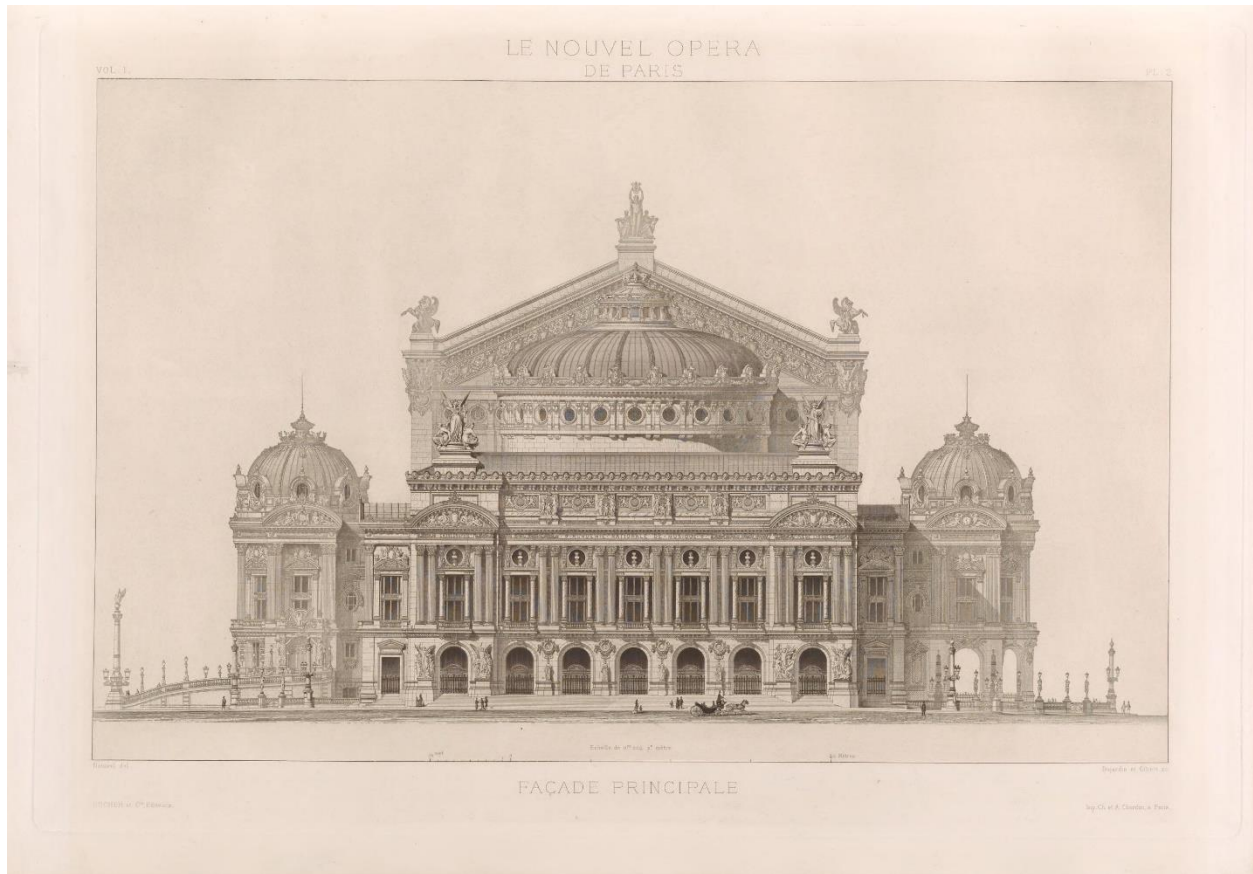


FIG. 0.29. 'Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris : Façade principale,' engraved by Dujardin and Gibert, in *Monographie du nouvel opéra de Paris* by Charles Garnier, 2 vols. (Ducher, 1880), I. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

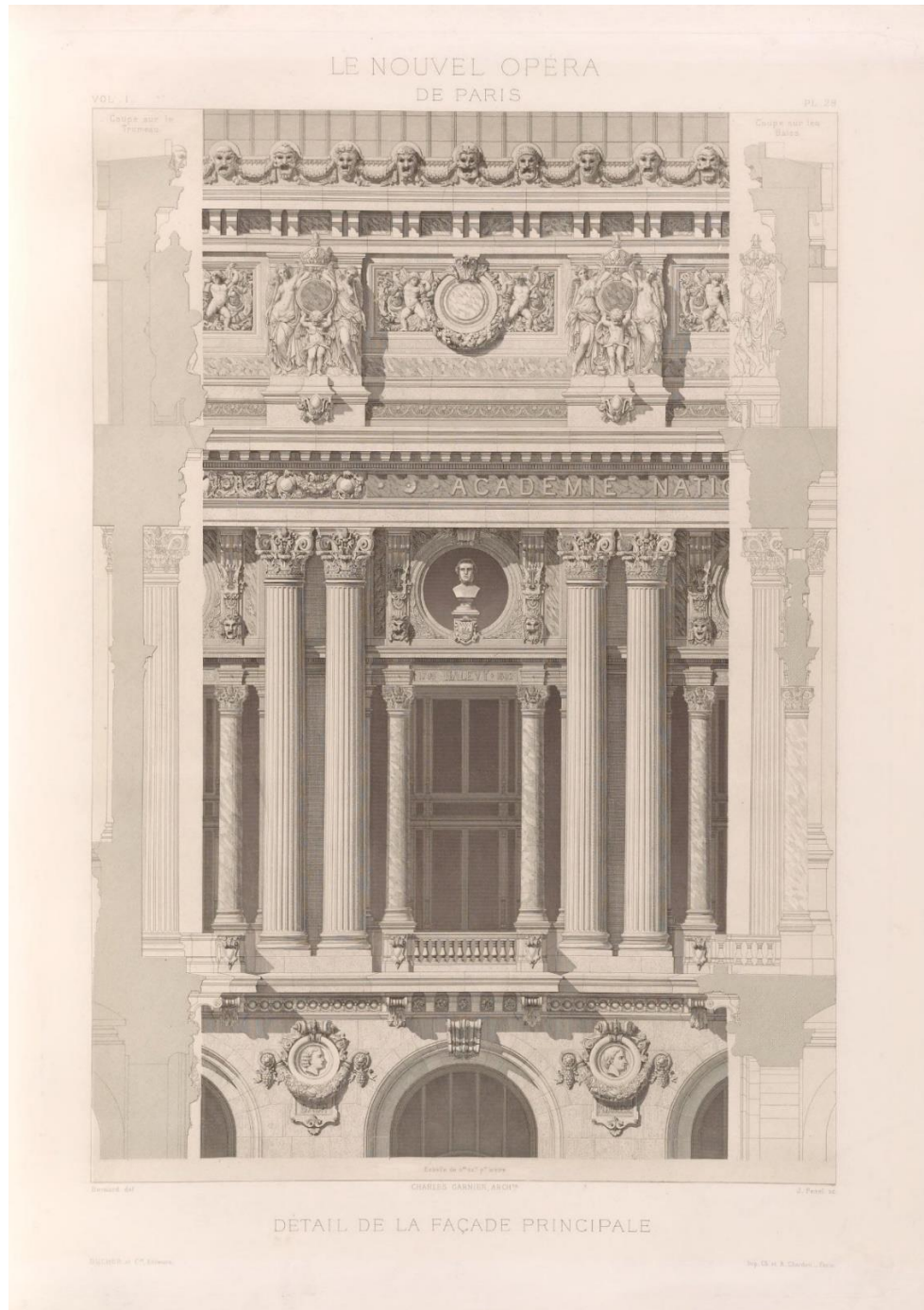


FIG. 0.30. Bernard, 'Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris : Détail de la façade principale,' engraved by J. Penel, in *Monographie du nouvel opéra de Paris* by Charles Garnier, 2 vols. (Ducher, 1880), I. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

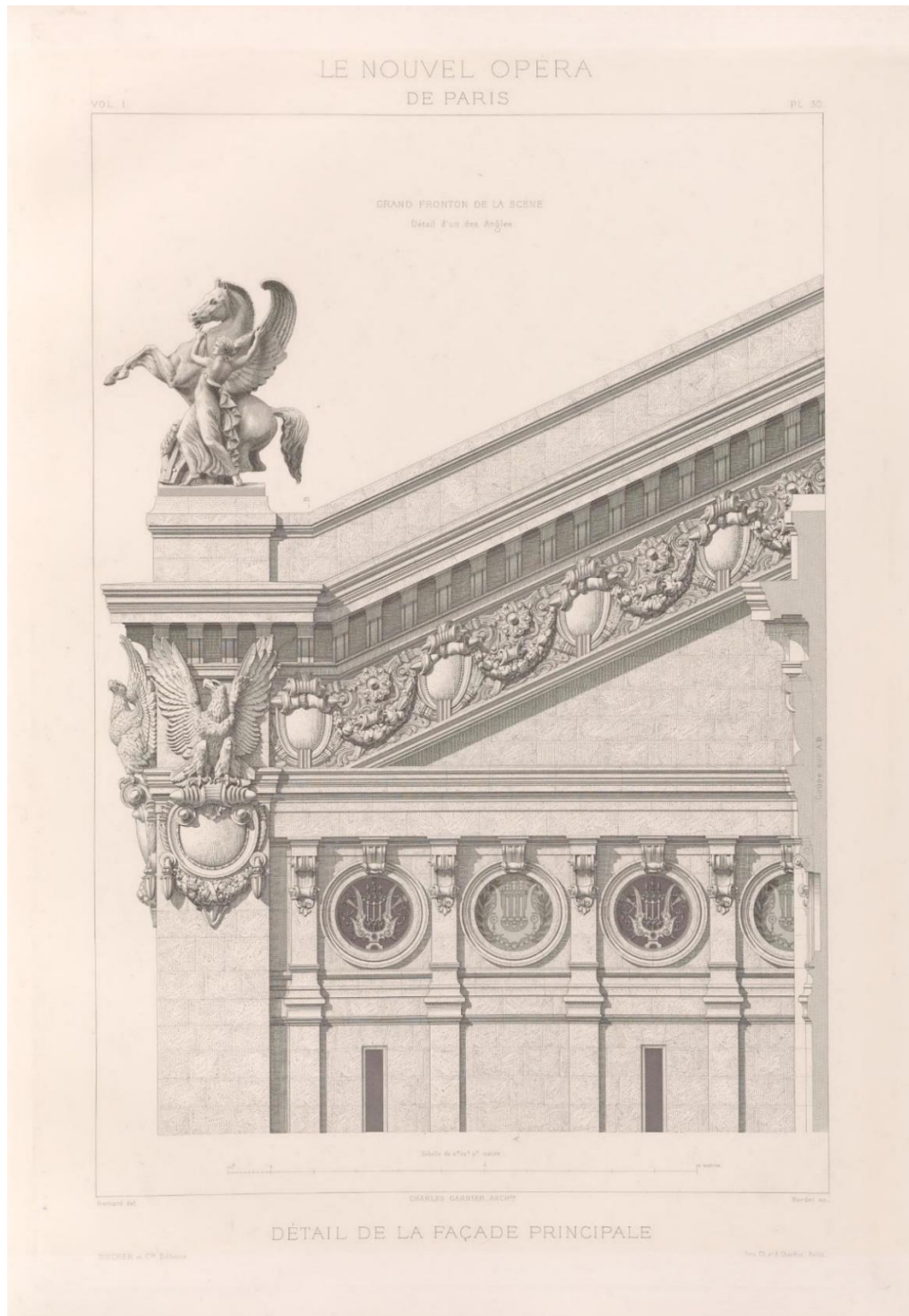


FIG. 0.31. Bernard, 'Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris : Détail de la façade principale,' engraved by Bordet, in *Monographie du nouvel opéra de Paris* by Charles Garnier, 2 vols. (Ducher, 1880), I. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 0.32. Victor Baltard, *Eglise Saint-Augustin à Paris, façade principale, élévation* (1868-1871), watercolour and ink on paper, 60.1 × 42.2 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

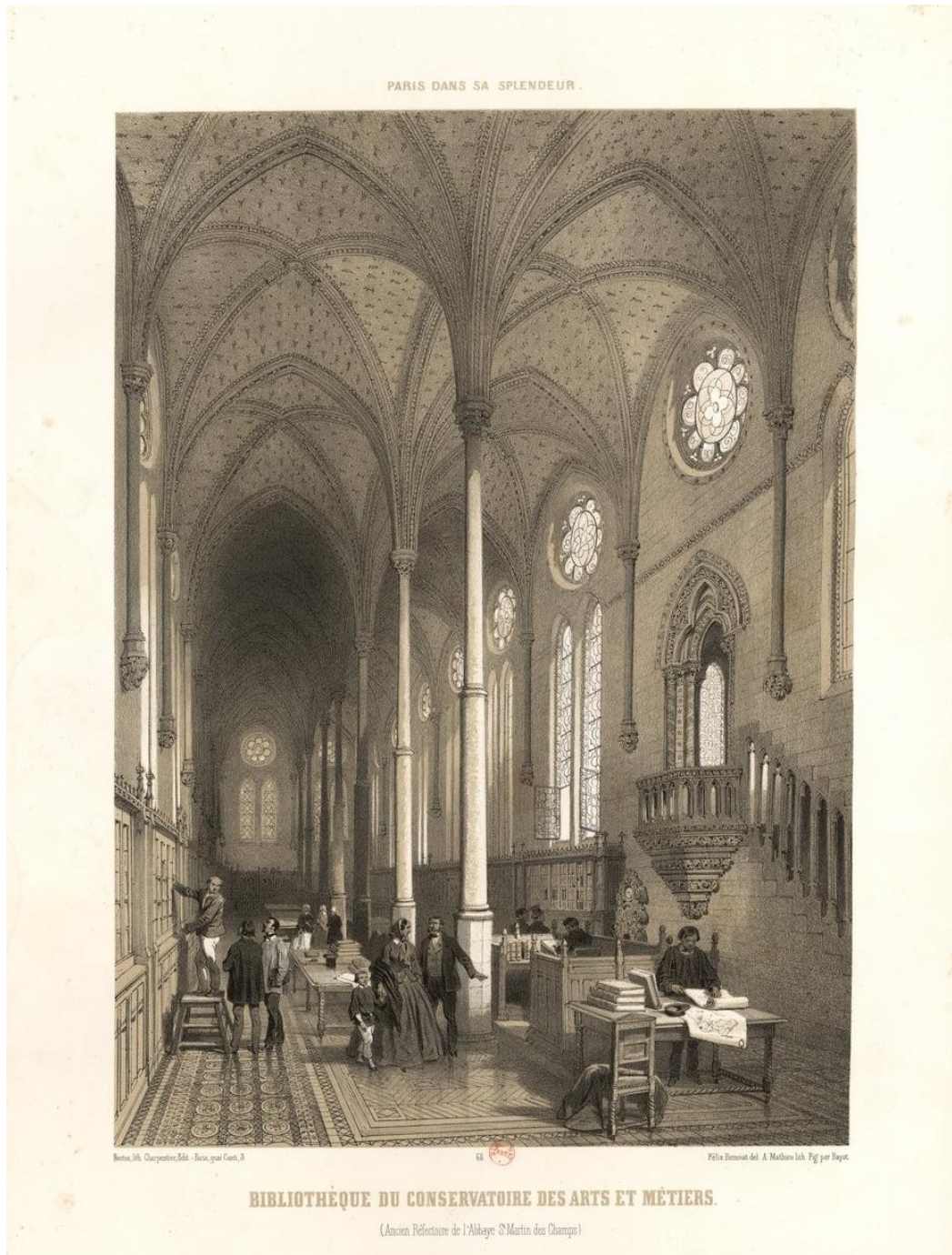


FIG. 0.33. Félix Benoist, *Bibliothèque du Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers : (Ancien Réfectoire de l'Abbaye St Martin des Champs)* (c. 1848), lithographed by A. Mathieu, print on paper, 34.9 × 24.8 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



FIG. 1.1. W. H. Bartlett, 'Court of the Mosque of Sultan Achmet,' engraved by S. Fisher, in *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* by Julia Pardoe (George Virtue, 1838). University of Toronto Libraries.



FIG. 1.2. Pascal-Xavier Coste, 'Vue de la niche du sanctuaire et de la chaire de la mosquée el Moyed,' engraved by Hibon, in *Architecture arabe, ou Monuments du Kaire, mesurés et dessinés, de 1818 à 1826* (Firmin Didot Frères, Fils, 1837-1839). MIT Libraries, Cambridge.

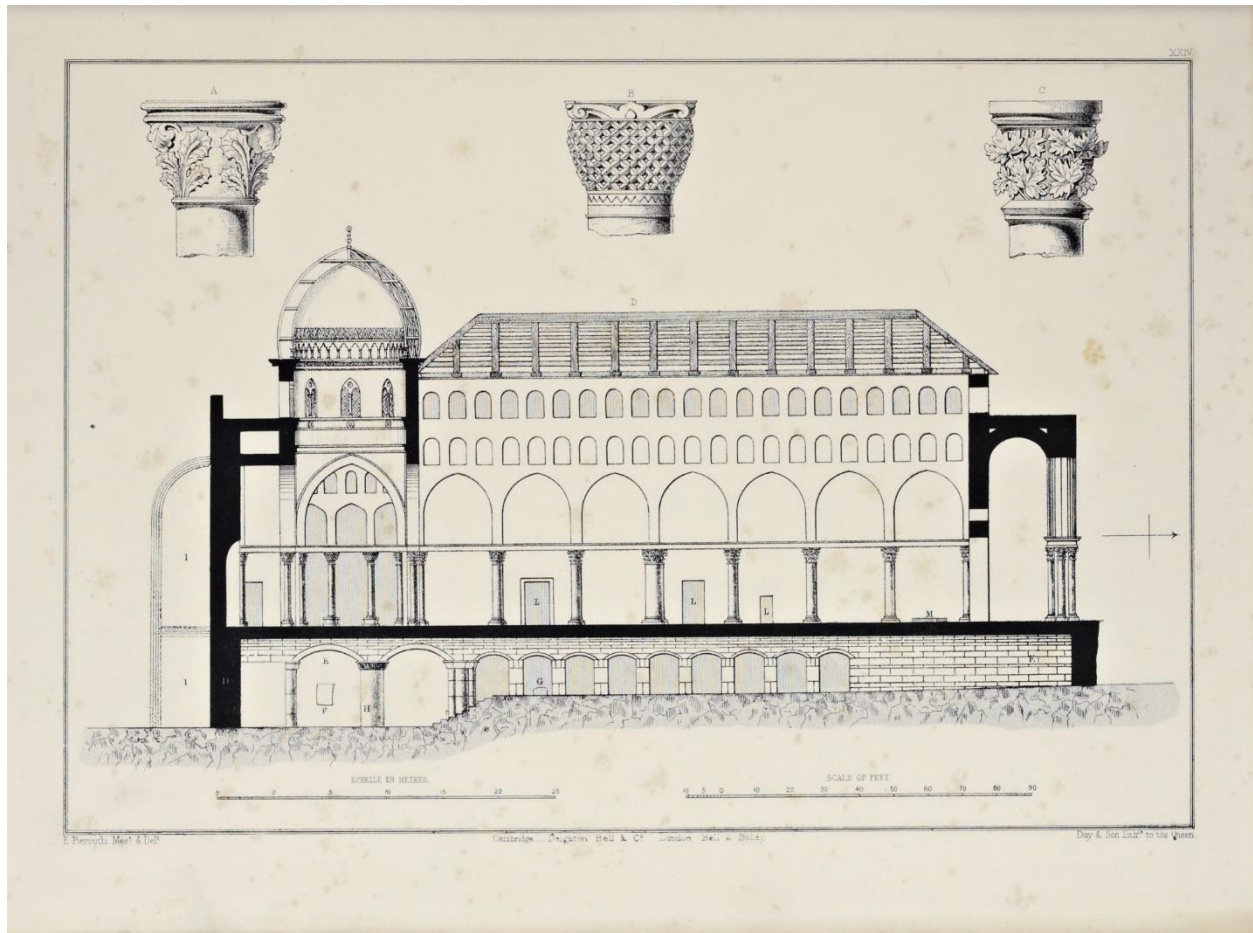


FIG. 1.3. Ermete Pierotti, 'Section of the Mosque of El-Aksa and its substructions,' lithographed by Day & Son, in *Jerusalem Explored: Being a Description of the Ancient and Modern City*, trans. by Thomas George Bonney, 2 vols (Bell & Daldy, 1864), II. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

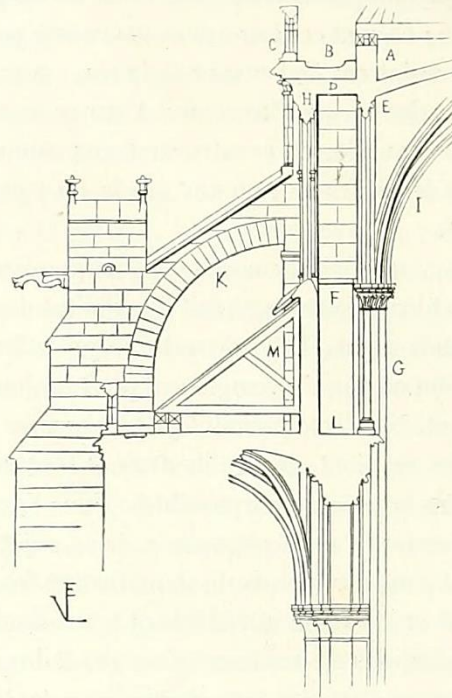
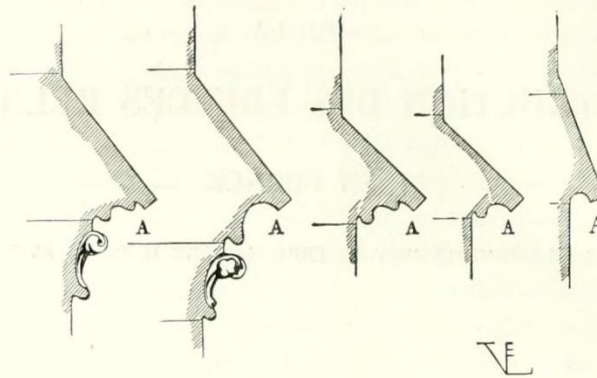


FIG. 1.4. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Example profile section of the Gothic pluvial displacement system], engraved by E. Guillaumot, in *Annales archéologiques*, 2 (1845). University of Toronto Libraries.

fient dans ce sens, et nous ne croyons pas pouvoir mieux faire que d'en donner ici quelques exemples.



Ces profils se retrouvent, avec peu de variantes, dans tous les édifices du XIII^e siècle. Il est facile de voir que dans le profil le plus simple, comme dans celui qui est le plus compliqué, la première moulure A est un *coupe-larme* destiné à se débarrasser d'abord des eaux. Or le but d'une corniche, d'un bandeau ou d'un filet quelconque, est de protéger les murs contre les efforts destructeurs de l'humidité. Dans quelle architecture trouvera-t-on ce but mieux rempli? Comparons ces profils si sagement combinés, et qui indiquent si bien l'usage auquel ils sont destinés, avec un profil de corniche romaine.

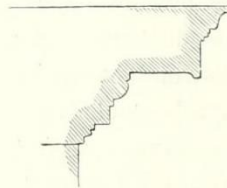


FIG. 1.5. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Example profiles of Gothic drip Molds and a Classical cornice], engraved by E. Guillaumot, in *Annales archéologiques*, 3 (1845). University of Toronto Libraries.

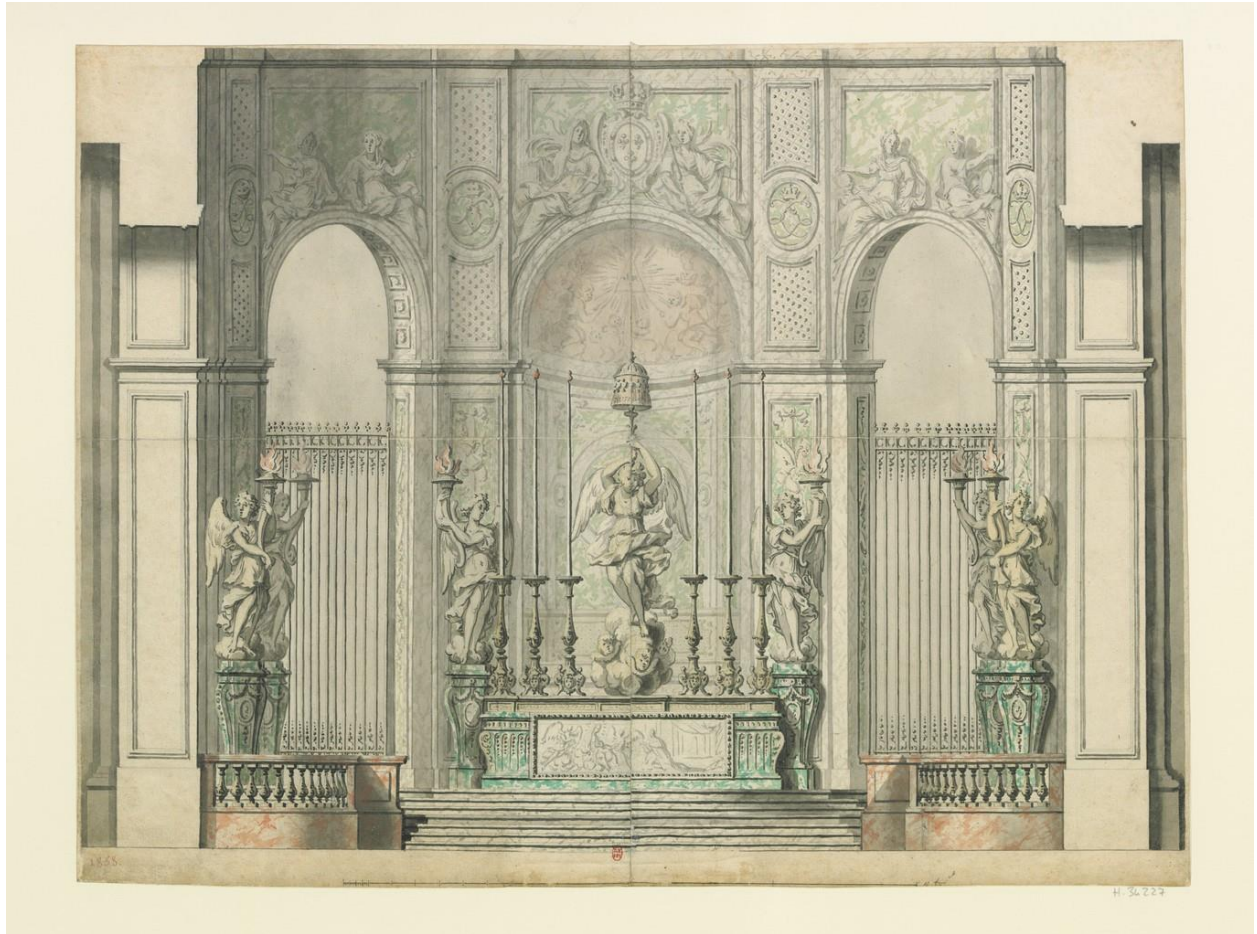


FIG. 1.6. Pierre Lepautre, [Paris, Notre-Dame Cathedral: elevation of the high altar of the said church, as it currently is, sketch for the final project and variants] (1703), watercolour and ink on paper, 40.4 × 53 cm.

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



© V. & K.

FIG. 2.1. William Robert Shepherd, 'France about 1035,' in *Historical Atlas*, 8th edn (Henry Holt, 1956). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. © V. & K.

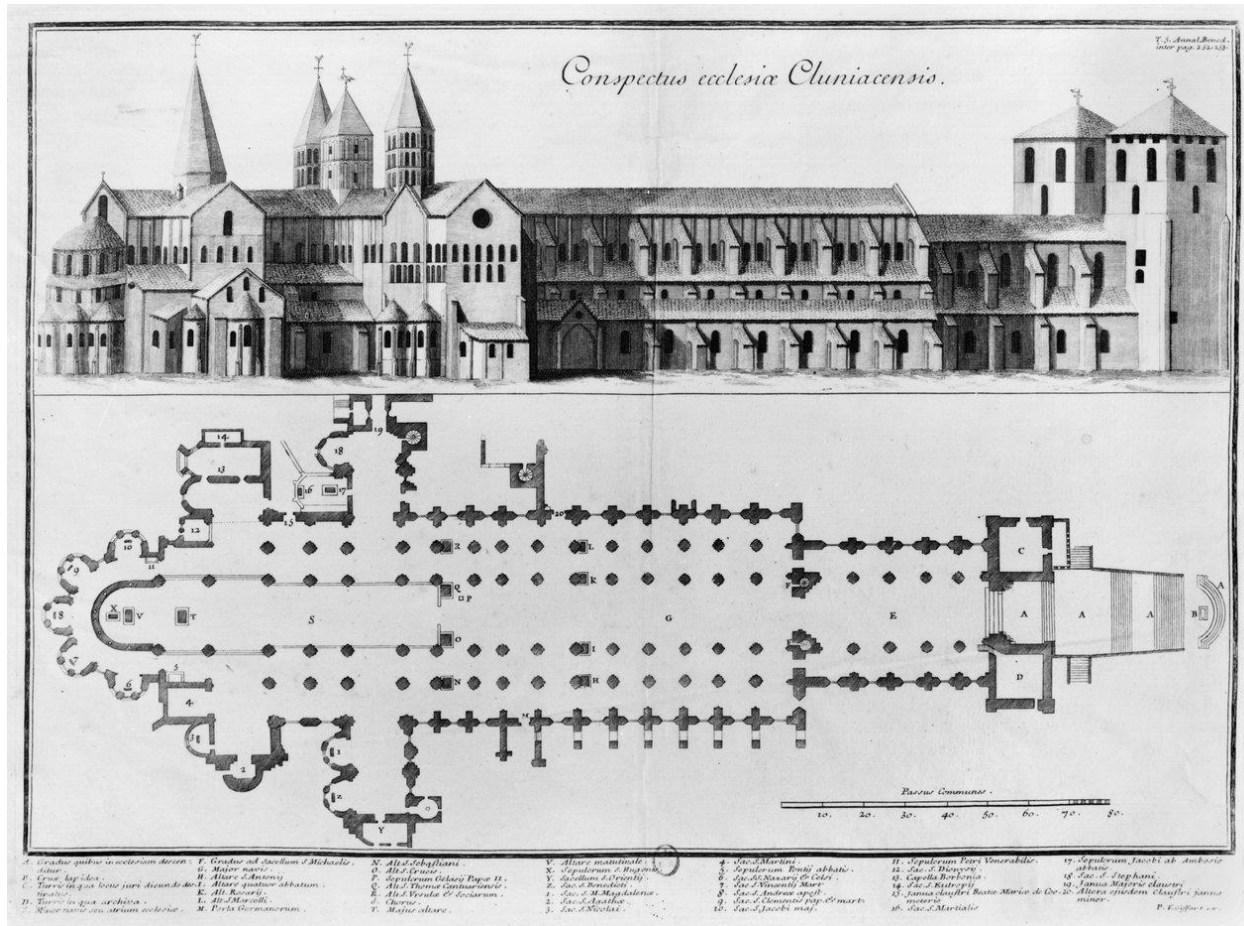


FIG. 2.2. 'Conspectus ecclesiæ Cluniacensis,' engraved by Pierre François Giffart, in *Annales Ordinis S. Benedicti Occidentalium Monachorum Patriarchae* by Johanne Mabillon, 6 vols (Leonardi Venturini, 1713), v. Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli.

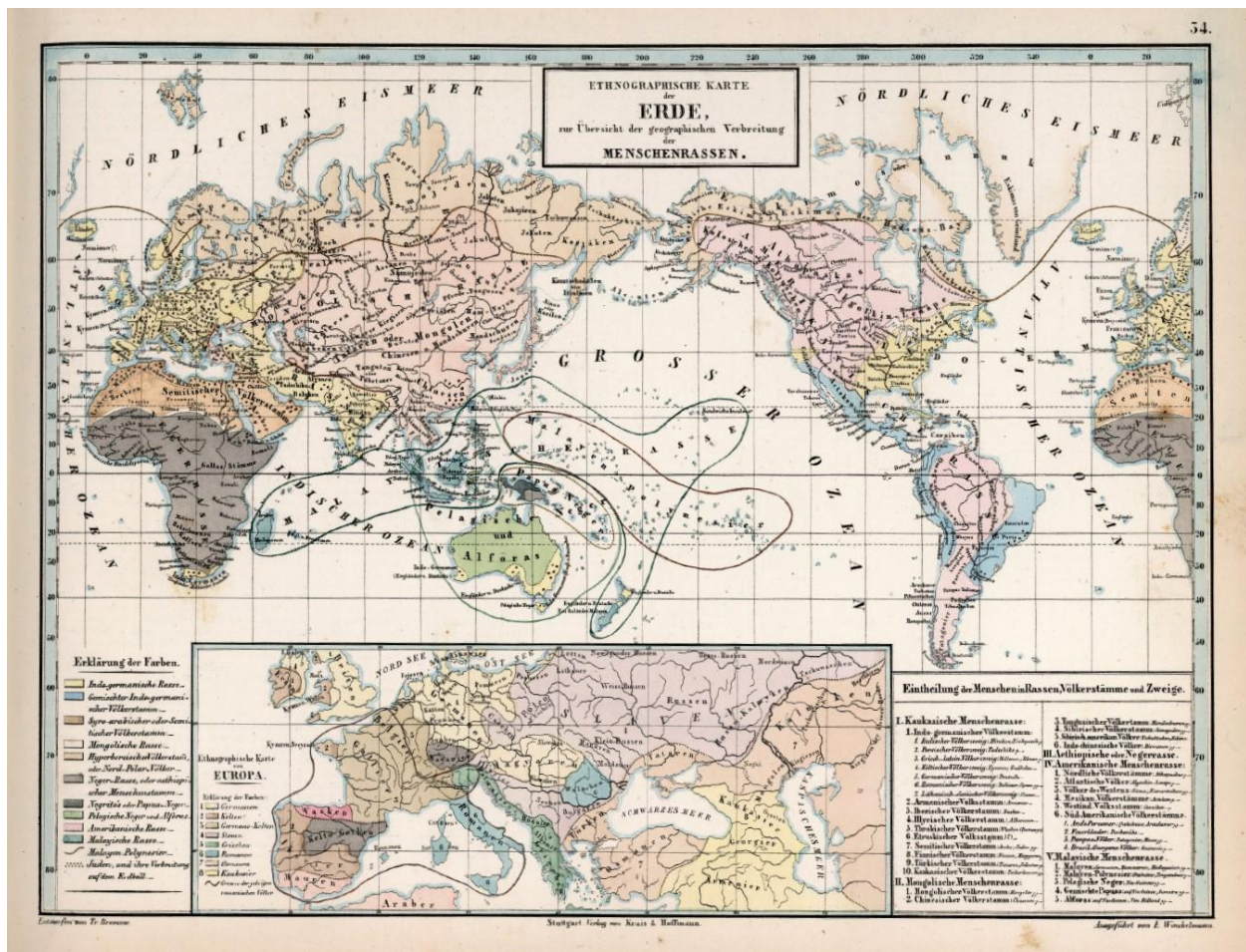


FIG. 2.3. 'Ethnographische Karte der Erde, zur Übersicht der geographischen Verbreitung der Menschenrassen,' in *Atlas zur Physik der Welt* by Traugott Bromme (Krais & Hoffman, 1851). David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

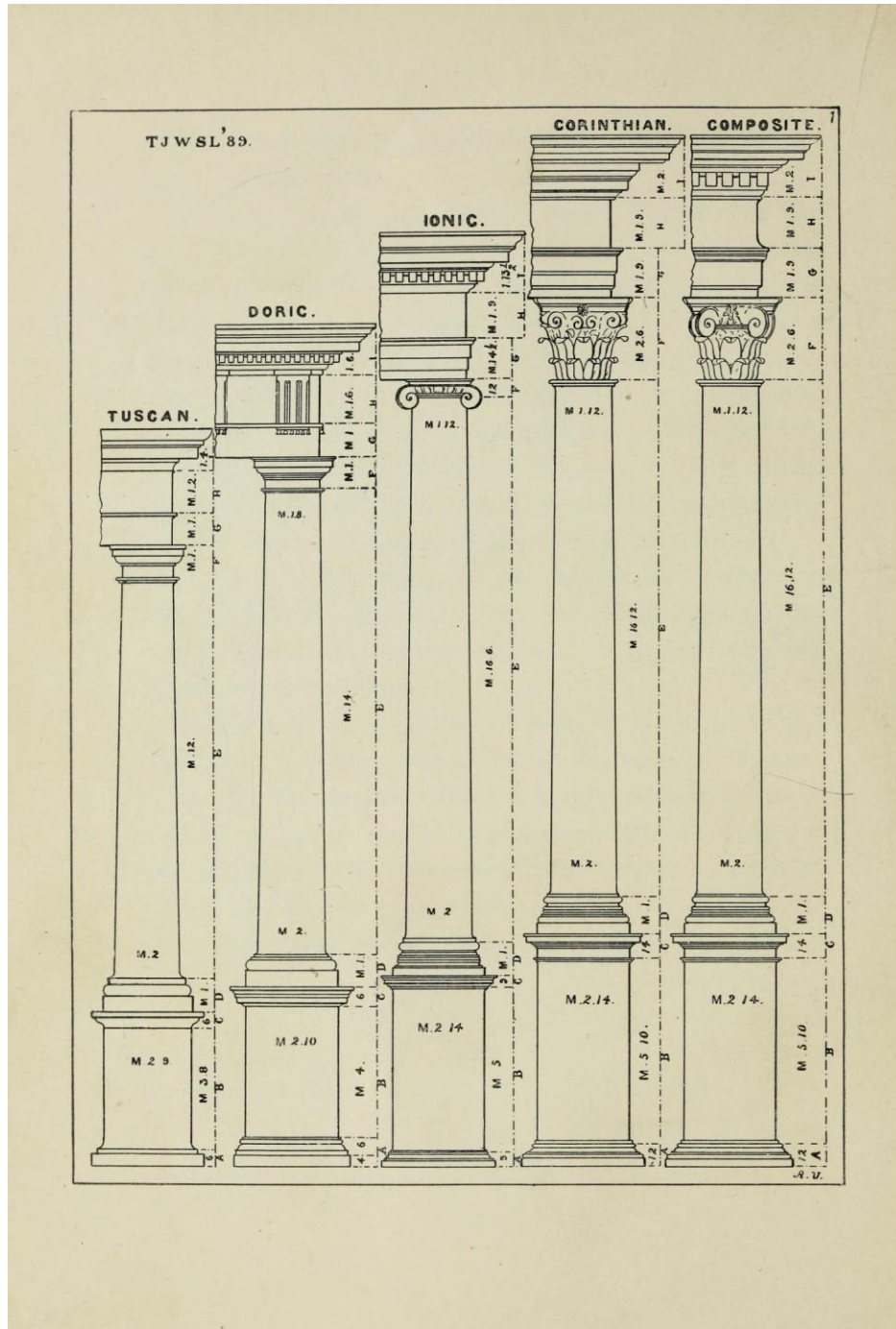


FIG. 2.4. Tommaso Juglaris and Warren Locke after Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, [The modules of the five orders], in *The Five Orders of Architecture*, trans. by Tommaso Juglaris and Warren Locke (Berwick & Smith, 1889). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

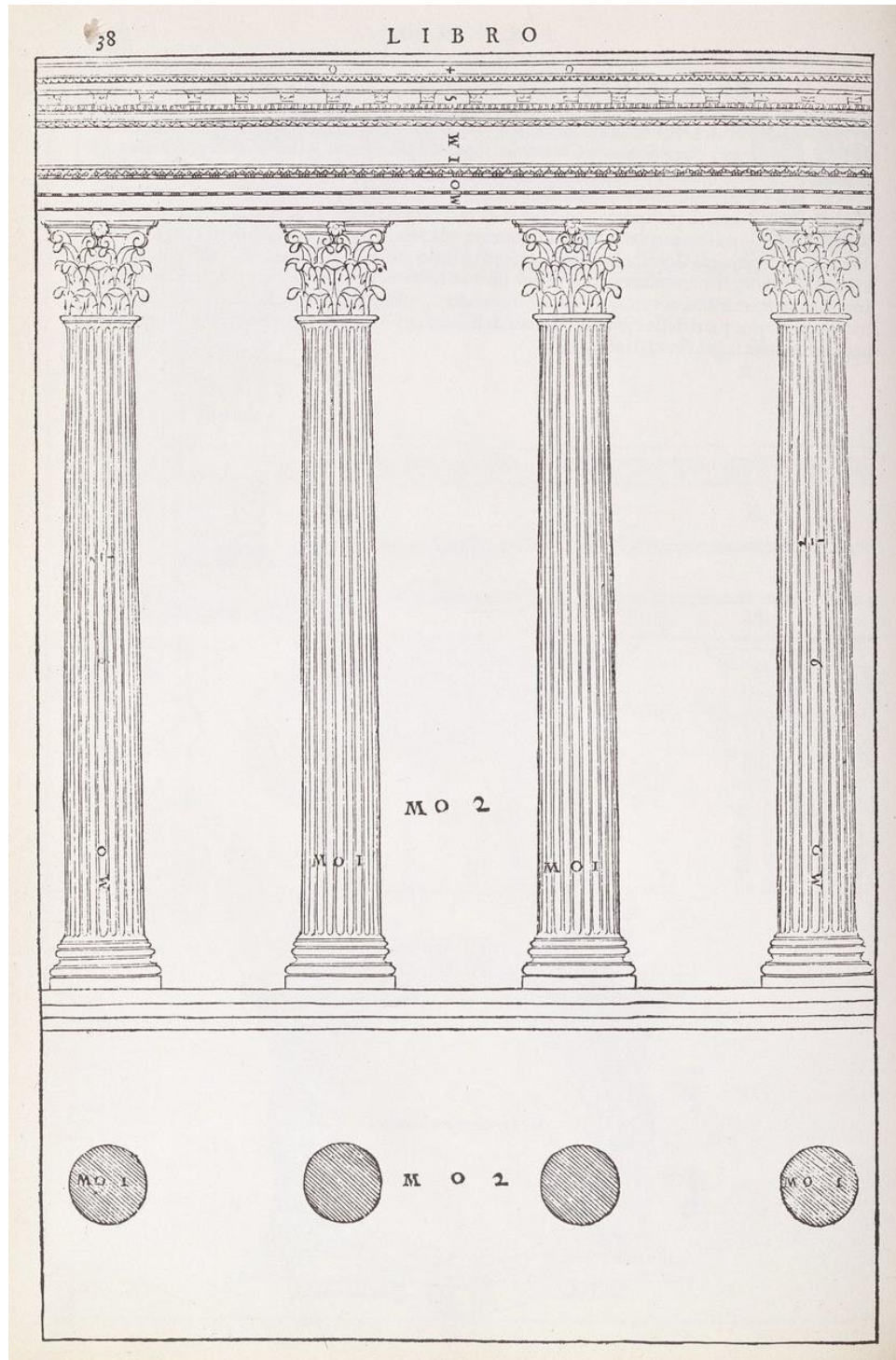


FIG. 2.5. Andrea Palladio, [Columns and entablature in the Corinthian order], in *The Four Books of Architecture*, trans by Isaac Ware (n. pub., 1738). Getty research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 2.6. Eugène Noury, *Cathédrale d'Évreux : Vue générale du nord* (1840), lithographed, print on paper, 30.8 × 40.3 cm. Médiathèques et bibliothèque patrimoniale d'Évreux.



FIG. 3.1. Augustus Petermann, ‘The World in Mercator’s Projection: Distinguishing the Principal States and Their Colonies,’ engraved by I. Dower, in *A Descriptive Atlas of Astronomy, and of Physical and Political Geography* by Thomas Milner (William S. Orr, 1850). New York Public Library.



FIG. 3.2. Nicolas Sanson, *Mexique, ou Nouvelle Espagne, Nouvelle Gallice, Iucatan &c. et autres provinces jusques a l'Isthme de Panama; ou sont les Audiencias de Mexico, de Guadalaiara, et de Guatimala* (1676), engraved by Somer, print and ink on paper, 36 × 54 cm. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.

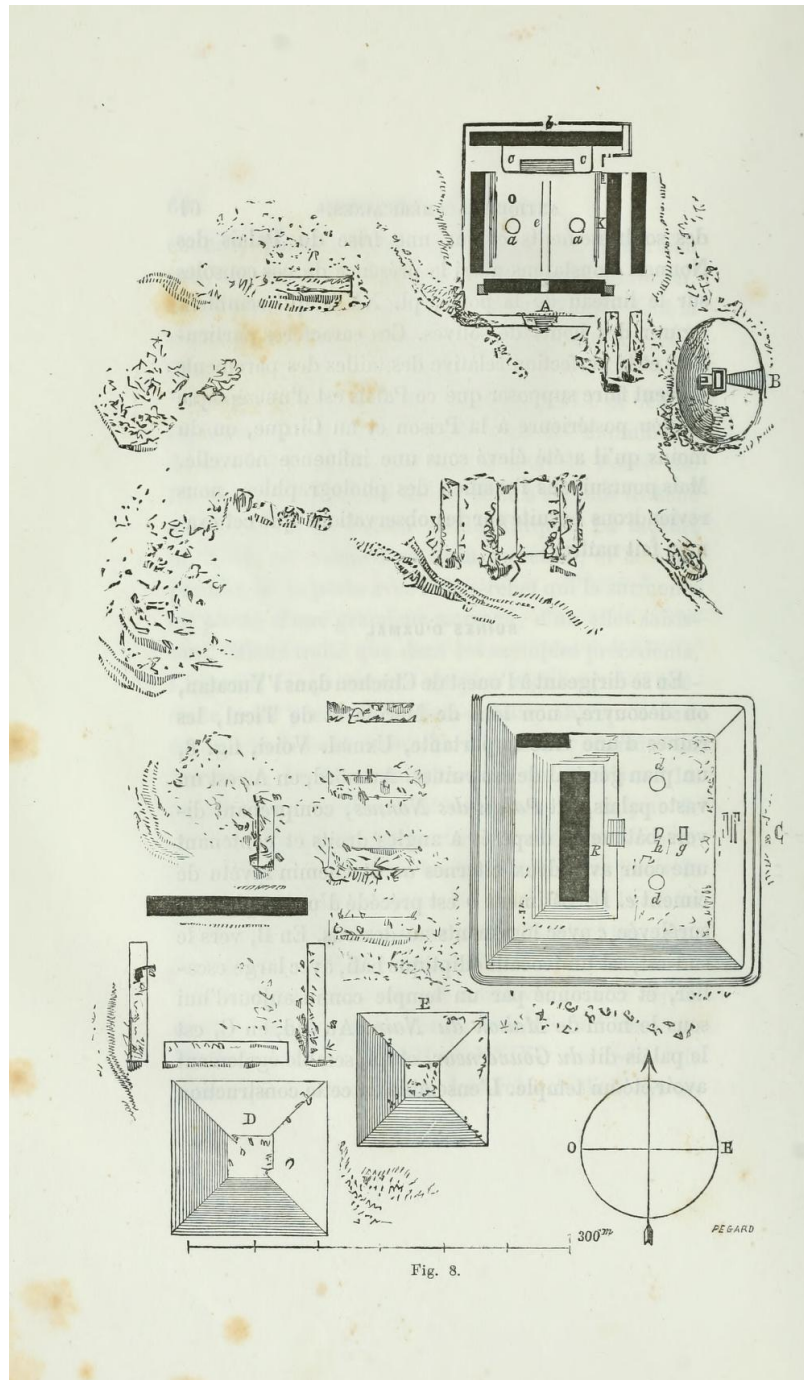


FIG. 3.3. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Plan view of the ruins of Uxmal], engraved by Pegard, in *Cités et ruines américaines: Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* by Désiré Charnay (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1863). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

ou à l'extérieur du palais de Mitla ne peut faire supposer que ces colonnes aient jamais supporté des lin-

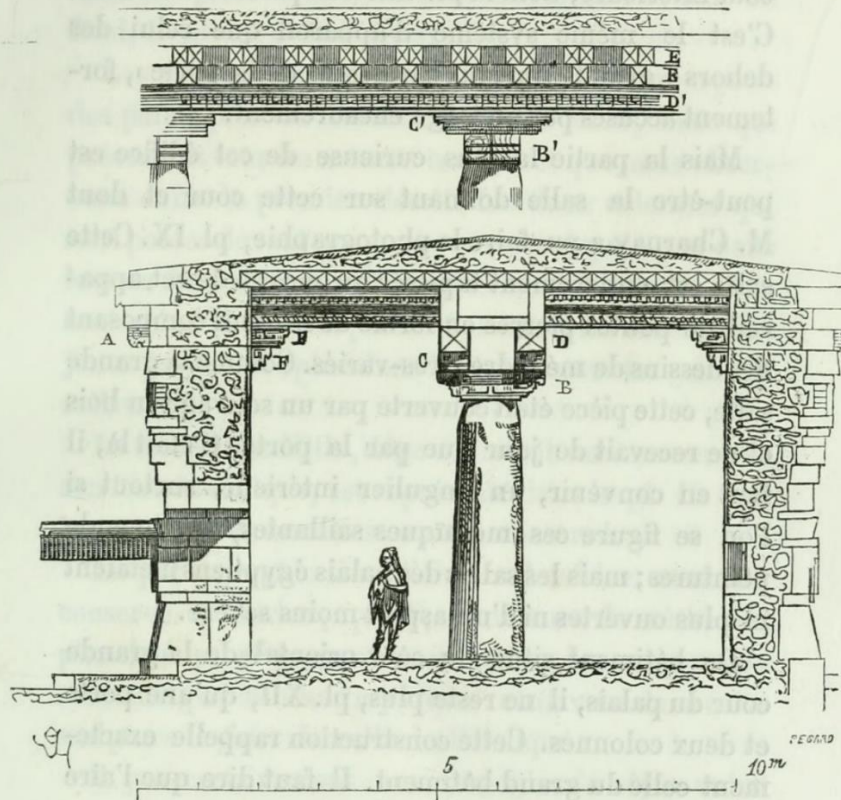


Fig. 12.

teaux de pierre. D'ailleurs ce genre de construction a beaucoup d'analogie avec certains monuments du nord de l'Inde et du Japon. Trois petites niches carrées s'ouvrent dans le mur du fond, en face des trois

FIG. 3.4. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Restored profile section of the main hall at Mitla], engraved by Pegard, in *Cités et ruines américaines: Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* by Désiré Charnay (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1863). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

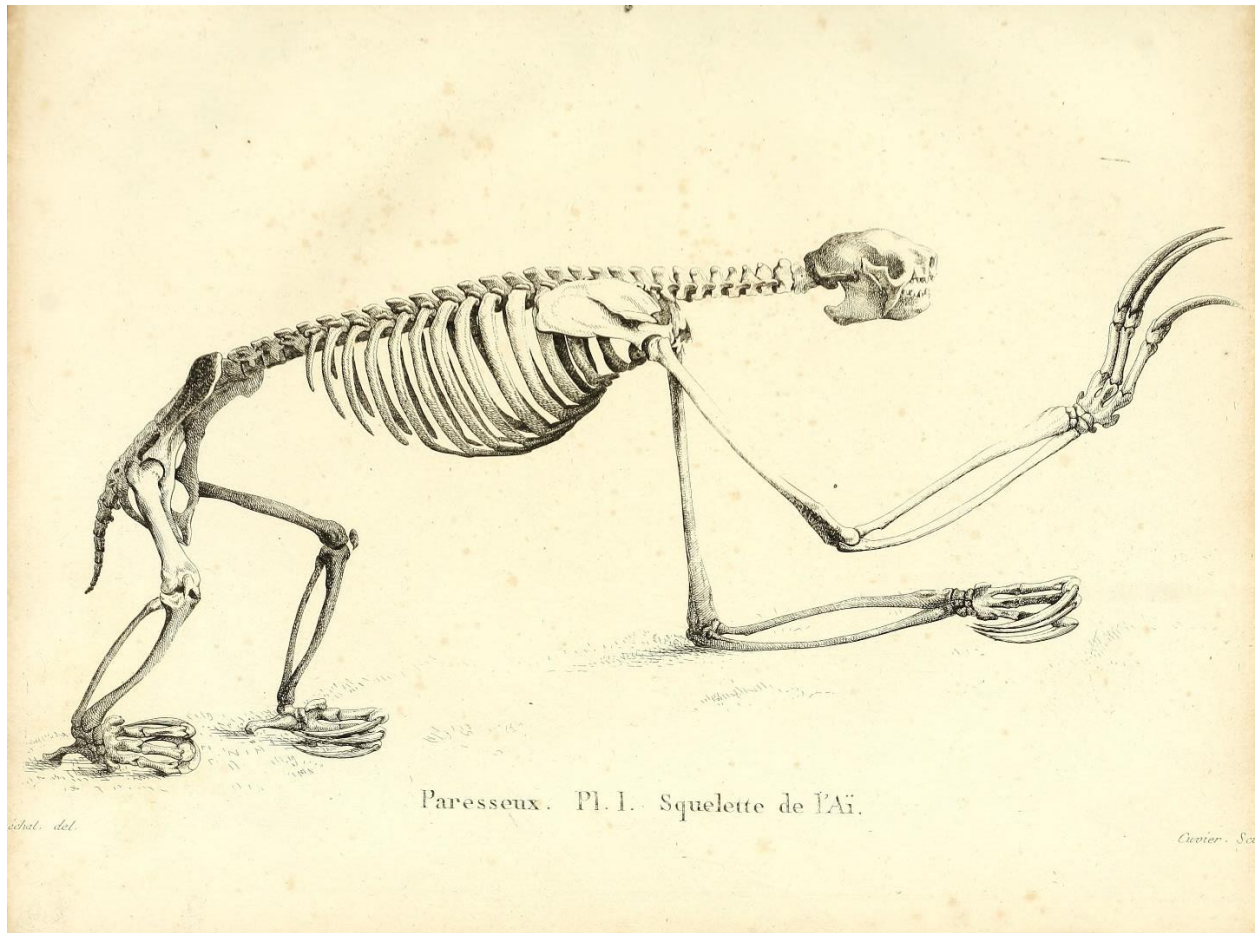


FIG. 3.5. Maréchal, 'Paresseux : Pl. 1 : Squelette de l'Aï,' engraved by Georges Cuvier in *Recherches sur les ossemens fossiles de quadrupeds, où l'on rétablit les caractères de plusieurs espèces d'animaux que les révolutions du globe paroissent avoir détruites* by Cuvier, 4 vols (Deterville, 1812), IV. Smithsonian Libraries, Washington D.C.



FIG. 4.1. Jules de Verneilh, *Roquetaillade le 17 8^{bre} 1868* (1868), lead on paper, [dimensions unspecified]. Médiathèque Pierre Fanlac de Périgueux. © Archives départementales de la Dordogne.

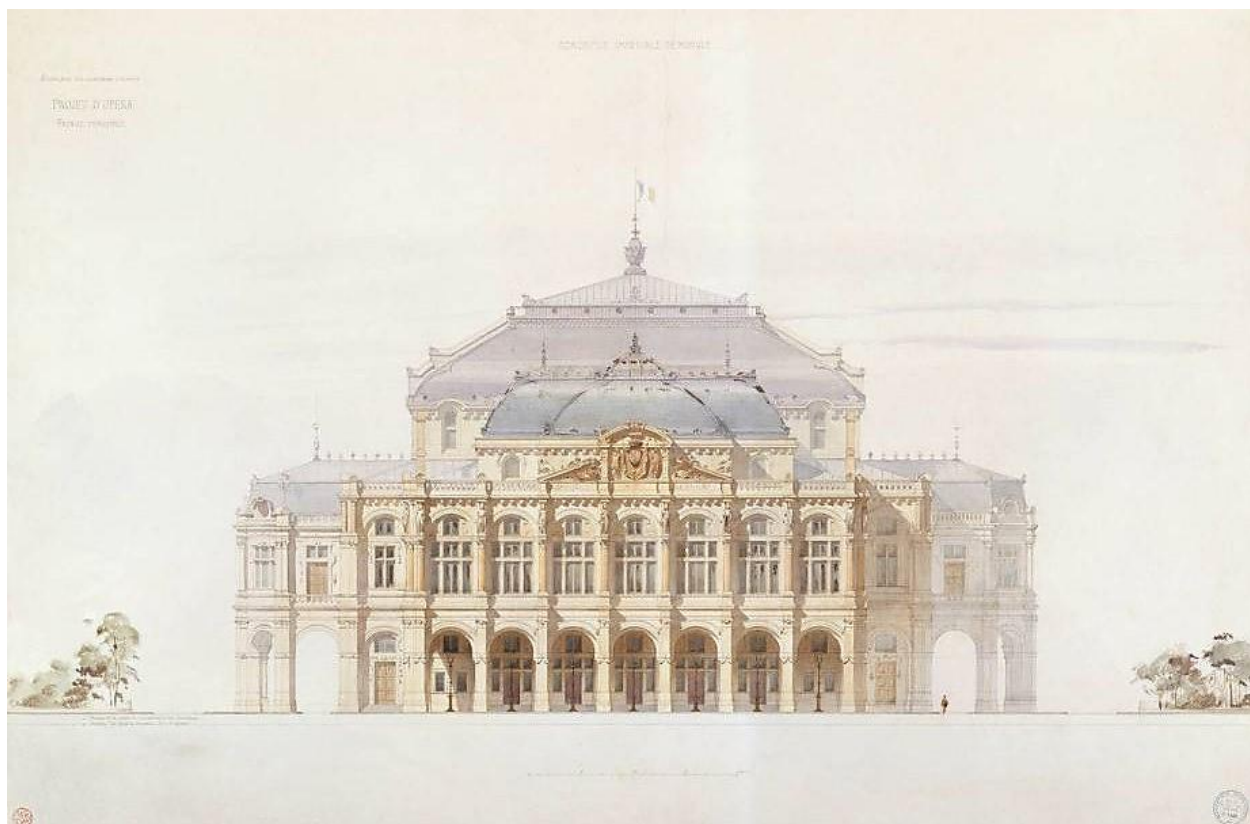


FIG. 4.2. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Académie impériale de musique, projet d'opéra, à Paris* (1860-1861), watercolour on paper, 64.1 × 96.1 cm.

Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.

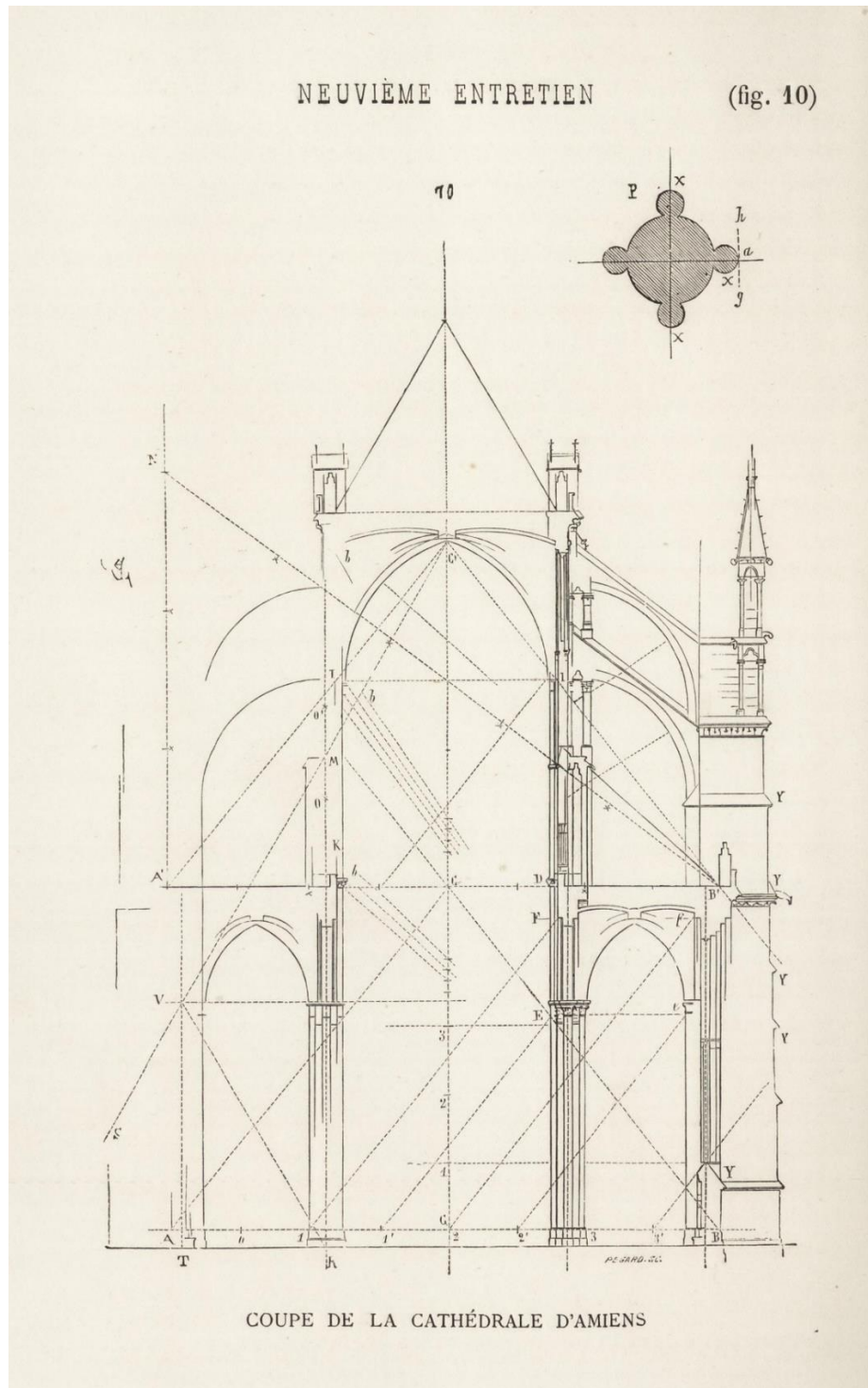
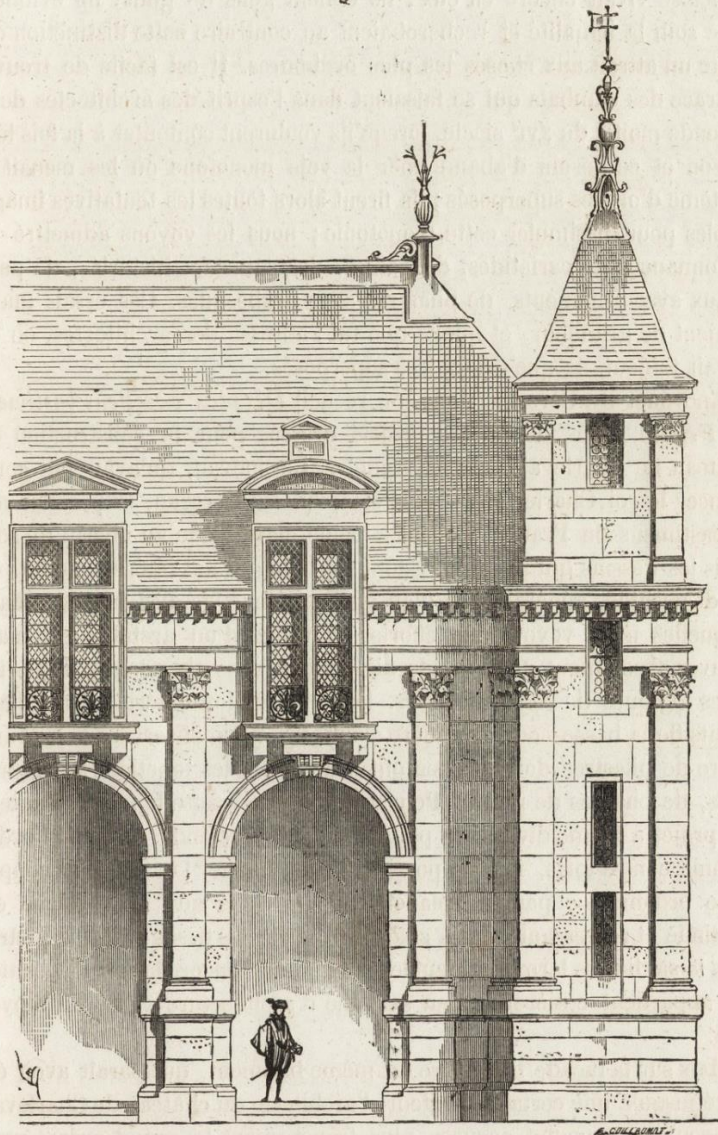


FIG. 4.3. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Coupe de la cathédrale d'Amiens,' engraved by Pegard, in *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, 2 vols (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1863), I. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

corinthiens à travers deux étages (figure 5¹). Ce mode avait l'avantage de

2



grandir singulièrement le petit bâtiment auquel il était appliqué, mais on aurait grand'peine à lui trouver un sens raisonnable. Cependant les

¹Voyez Du Cerceau. *Des plus excellens bastimens de France*.

FIG. 4.4. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Partial exterior elevation of Chantilly castle], engraved by E. Guillaumot, in *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, 2 vols (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1863), I. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

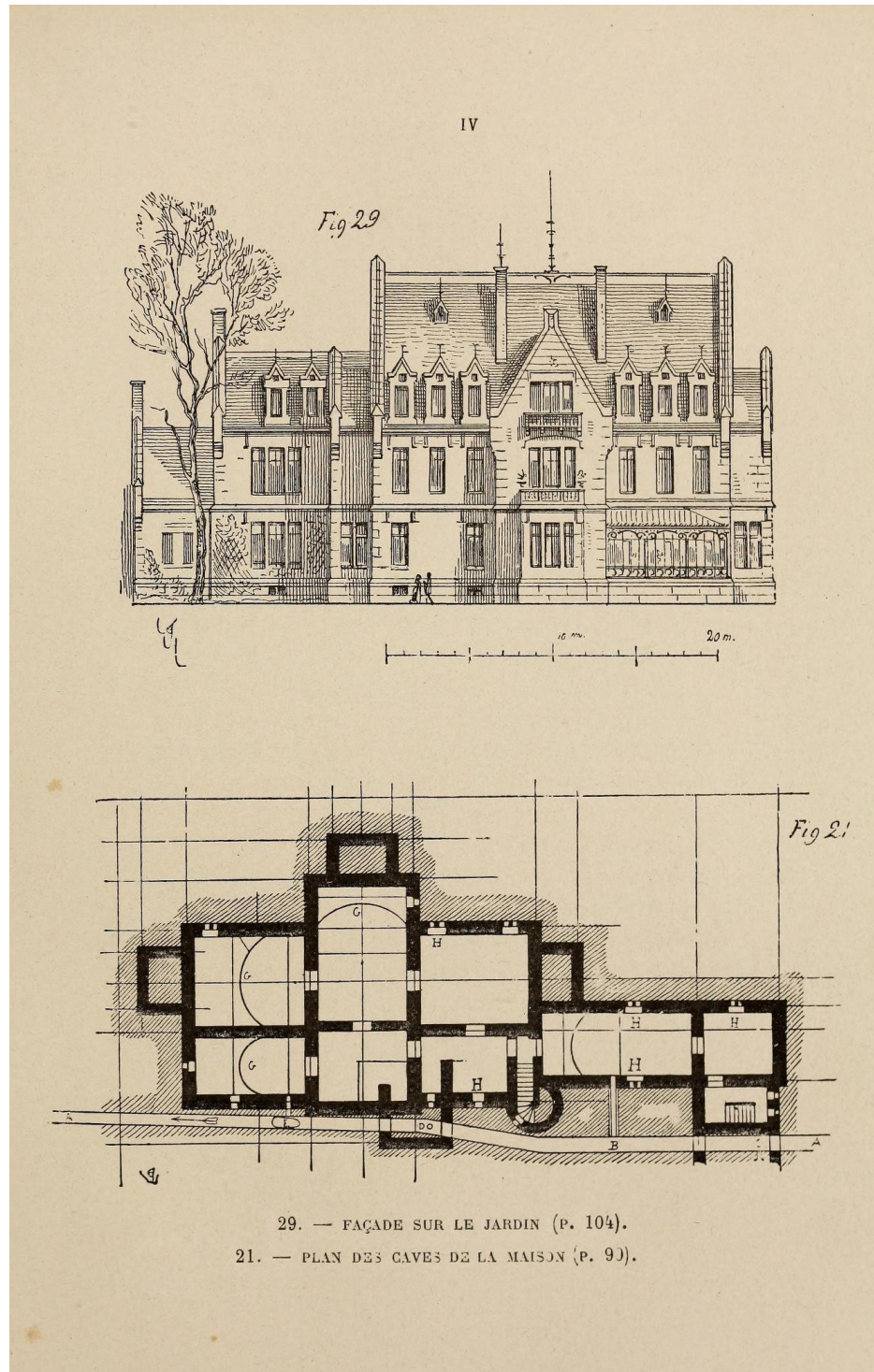
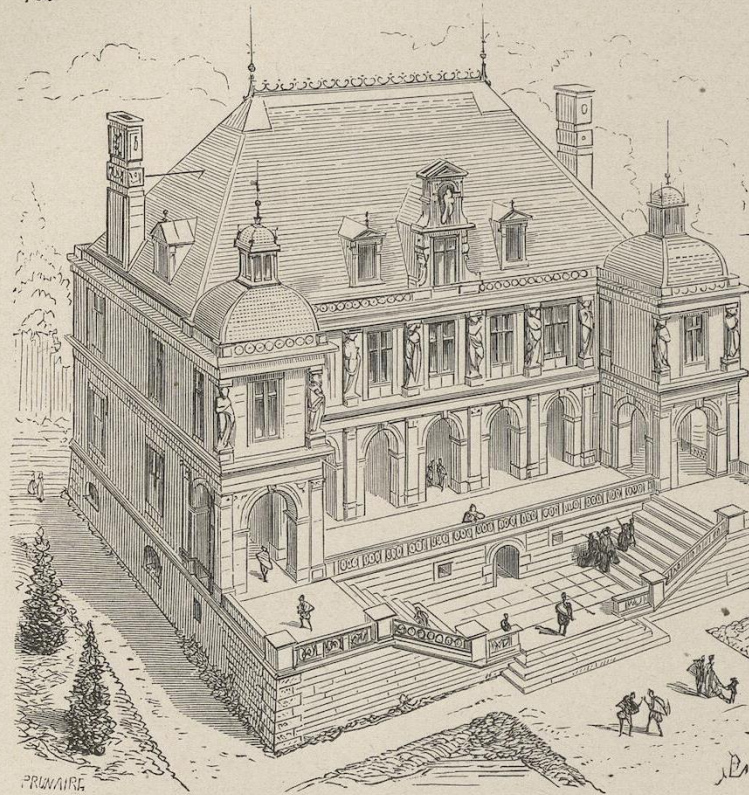


FIG. 5.1. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Façade sur le jardin : Plan des caves de la maison,' in *Histoire d'une Maison* (J. Hetzel, 1873). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

RENAISSANCE

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VUE D'UN HÔTEL DE LA RENAISSANCE — PARIS (P. 347).

FIG. 5.2. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Vue d'un hôtel de la Renaissance — Paris,' engraved by A. Prunaire, in *Histoire de l'habitation humaine : Depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (J. Hetzel, 1875). Harold B. Lee Library, Provo.

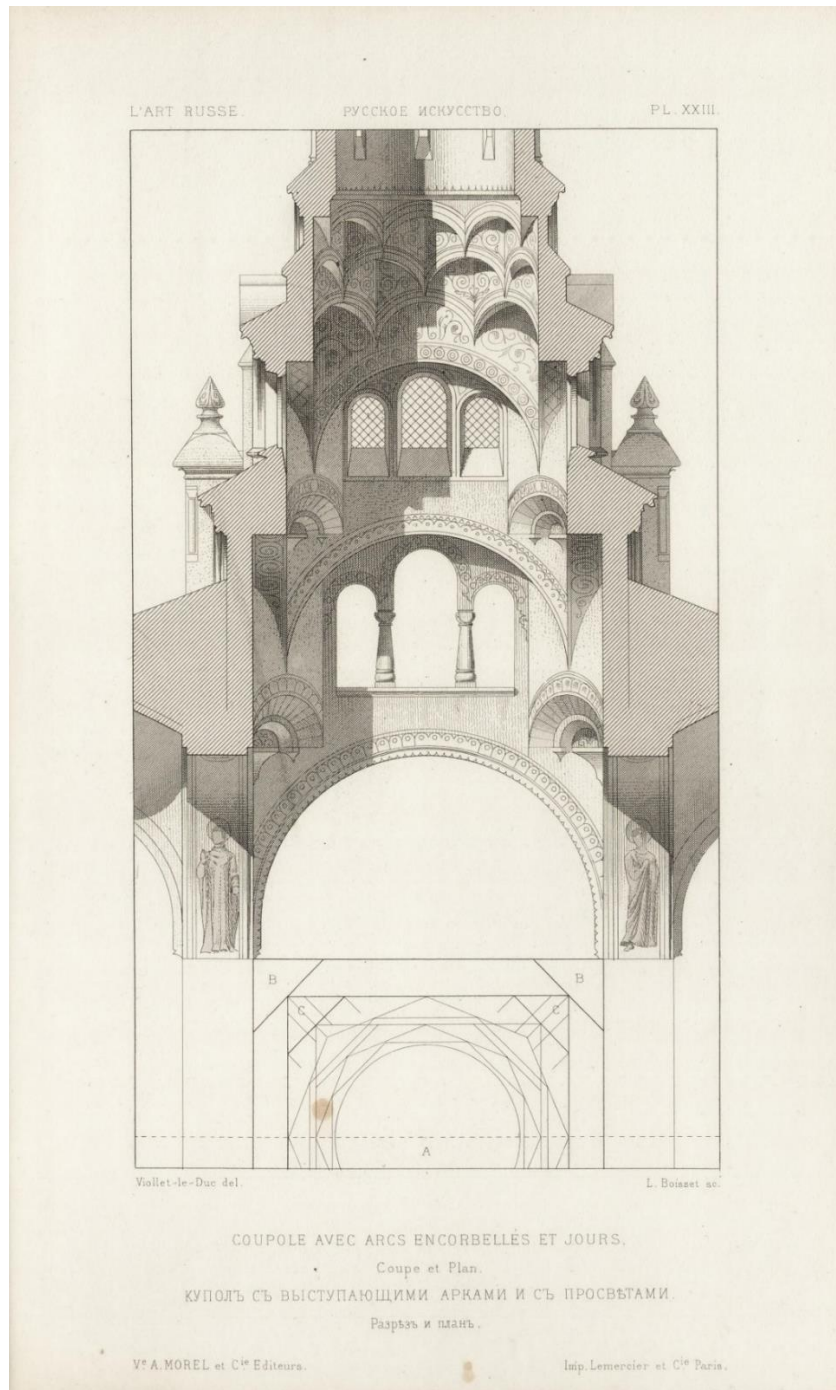


FIG. 6.1. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Coupole avec encorbelles et jours : Coupe et plan,' engraved by L. Boisset, in *L'Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir* (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1877). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 6.2. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 'Porte d'église avec auvent de charpente,' engraved by J. Sulpis, in *L'Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir* (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1877). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 6.3. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, [Design for a vaulted portico], engraved by A. Prunaire, in *L'Art russe : Ses origines, ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir* (V^{ve} A. Morel, 1877). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIG. 6.4. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Simorre (Gers), église : Projet de restauration, plan du rez-de-chaussée, plan au niveau des voûtes avec l'indication des parties à restaurer et les fermes des nouveaux combles, vues perspectives* (1872), watercolour and ink on paper, 24.1 × 36.7 cm. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.



FIG. 6.5. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Elévation de la façade occidentale de la cathédrale de Clermont-Ferrand : Projet d'achèvement* (1864), watercolour on paper, [dimensions unspecified]. Médiathèque du Patrimoine et de la Photographie, Charenton-le-Pont.