

A DISCUSSION OF THE INFLUENCE OF ANTIQUITY
IN THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE
PRODUCED DURING THE REIGN OF
EMPEROR NAPOLEON 1ST

BY

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the effect of antiquity on the production of art and architecture during Napoleon's reign. Two ancient civilisations, Egypt and Rome, are used as examples of antiquity, chosen due to the expeditions led by Napoleon to Italy and Egypt prior to his reign. The effect of these expeditions on French cultural output is charted through selected examples that decorated Paris and the changes the city underwent as it became an Imperial capital.

The first chapter considers the presentation of looted artwork in the Louvre. How specific ancient statues were displayed is explored in relation to Napoleon's imperial dreams and French society's Republican and subsequently Imperial redefinition. The second chapter studies the impact of the Egyptian expedition on Napoleonic art and architecture but also as a mode of forming cultural memory for French society during and after Napoleon's reign. The final chapter disseminates how antiquity was translated onto monuments, focussing specifically on the Champs-Élysées axis. This leads to a brief discussion of the French restorations in Rome during the Napoleonic era. Conclusions are then drawn on the physical representation of antiquity and its use as mode of expression for French society in the years following the Revolution.

DEDICATION

A.W.S

'I learned... that one can never go back, that one should not ever try to go back – that the essence of life is going forward. Life is really a One Way Street'

Agatha Christie (1965)

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*'This is a gift
It comes with a price
Who is the lamb and who is the knife?
Midas is king and he holds me so tight
And turns me to gold in the Sunlight.'*

Rabbit Heart
Florence + the Machine (2009)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER I	ANTIQUITY VISITS PARIS	5
	Case Study I: The <i>Laocoön</i>	11
	Case Study II: The <i>Apollo Belvedere</i>	14
	Case Study III: The <i>Dying Gaul</i>	16
	Case Study IV: The Venetian <i>Quadriga</i>	18
	Case Study V: Preparing the Louvre	23
CHAPTER II	EGYPTOMANIA IN PARIS	27
	Case Study I: The <i>Frontispiece</i> for the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i>	31
	Case Study II: The Fontaine du Fellah	40
	Case Study III: The Fontaine de la Victoire	43
	Case Study IV: The Luxor Obelisk	46
CHAPTER III	DECORATING THE EMPIRE: PARIS AND ROME	50
	Case Study I: The Arc de Triomphe	51
	Case Study II: The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel	62
	Case Study III: The Vendôme Column	64
	Case Study IV: The Restorations in Rome	67
CONCLUSION		73
ILLUSTRATIONS		78
MAPS		121
BIBLIOGRAPHY		123

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>Figures</u>		Page number
Figure 1	<i>The Laocoön</i> , Vatican Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	78
Figure 2	Jean Pierre Droz, decorative medal: the reverse celebrates the Conquest of Istria, and shows the restored Temple of Augustus at Pola, minted in 1806 Number 512 in the Bramsen collection. ¹	79
Figure 3	Bertrand Andrieu, decorative medal, the obverse shows Napoleon's head crowned with laurels and the reverse shows the Laocoön at the centre of the Salle de Laocoön in the Musée Napoléon, minted in 1804 Bramsen, 367	79
Figure 4	<i>The Apollo Belvedere</i> , Vatican Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	80
Figure 5	Anonymous etching, <i>Napoleon Bonaparte showing the Apollo Belvedere to his Deputies</i> , c.1800, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris	81
Figure 6	Bertrand Andrieu, decorative medal: the reverse showing the Apollo Belvedere at the centre of the Salle de L'Apollon in the Musée Napoléon, minted in 1804 Bramsen, 371	81
Figure 7	Antonio Canova, <i>Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker</i> , 1806, Apsley House, London Anonymous Photograph	82
Figure 8	<i>The Dying Gaul</i> , Capitoline Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	83
Figure 9	The original bronze <i>Quadriga</i> , Basilica di San Marco, Venice Photograph courtesy of http://philip.greenspun.com	84
Figure 10	Anonymous sketch, <i>The Horses of St Marks being Shipped to France</i> , 1797 University of Reading Library	85

¹ Bramsen provided a comprehensive catalogue of Napoleonic medals in his 1904 work. I have used his catalogue numbers here as a useful and common reference point.

Figure 11	Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, <i>Triumphal Entry of the Monuments of the Arts and Sciences, 9 and 10 Thermidor Year VI, 1798</i> engraving Bibliothèque National de France, Paris	85
Figure 12	The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, Paris Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	86
Figure 13	Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Designs for the walls of the Caffè degl'Inglesi, in the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, 1769 First published: Piranesi 1769	87
Figure 14	Dominique Vivant Denon, The <i>Frontispiece</i> from the first edition of the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i> , 1809	88
Figure 15	Engraving of an Imperial Eagle from the inside of the Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	89
Figure 16	The South Propylon at Thebes, Karnak taken from the Volume III, Plate 51 of the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i> , 1809	89
Figure 17	The Fontaine du Fellah, Rue de Sèvres, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	90
Figure 18	The Fontaine de la Victoire, Place du Châtelet, Paris Anonymous photograph, June 2006	91
Figure 19	The Luxor Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	92
Figure 20	Detail of the Antinous figure from the Fontaine du Fellah Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	93
Figure 21	Statue of Antinous from Hadrian's Villa, Vatican Museum, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	93
Figure 22	Detail of the Imperial Eagle from the Fontaine du Fellah Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	93
Figure 23	The Hypostyle of the Main Temple of Philae Perspective View, showing engravings of palm leaves, taken from the Volume I, Plate 18 of the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i> , 1809	94

Figure 24	Detail of the Fontaine de la Victoire showing the Classically dressed figures embracing the base of the monument Anonymous Photograph, May 2008	94
Figure 25	Detail of the winged figure crowning the column of the Fontaine de la Victoire Anonymous photograph, January 2010	95
Figure 26	Jacques-Louis David, <i>Sketch of the Distribution of the Eagles</i> , 1808, pen and ink wash, 181 x 290cm Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris	95
Figure 27	Sculpted block of granite from Karnak, taken from Volume III, Plate 31 of the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i> , 1809	96
Figure 28	Detail of the base of the Fontaine de la Victoire showing, the cornucopias and Imperial Eagle Photograph courtesy of www.lartnouveau.com	96
Figure 29	The <i>Genius of Augustus</i> , Vatican Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	97
Figure 30	Statue of the god of the Nile, Vatican Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	98
Figure 31	Detail of the cornucopias on the statue of the god of the Nile, Vatican Museums, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	99
Figure 32	View from the Place de la Concorde up the Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	99
Figure 33	Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	100
Figure 34	Jean-Baptiste Chalgrin, Nicholas Huyot and Raymond Blouet, early studies for the Arc de Triomphe	101
Figure 35	Arch of Titus, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	102
Figure 36	Eagle relief from the Arch of Titus Photograph by Diana Spencer, January 2008	102

Figure 37	Ribart de Chamoust, Longitudinal section for an elephant shaped fountain on the Place de l'Etoile, 1758, gouache engraving Musée Carnavalet, Paris	103
Figure 38	Jean-Pierre Cortot, <i>Triumph of Napoleon</i> , c.1835, South East Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	104
Figure 39	Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, <i>Napoleon on the Imperial Throne</i> , 1806, oil on canvas, 259 x 162 cm Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris	105
Figure 40	Detail of a triumphal procession, interior frieze, the Arch of Titus, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	106
Figure 41	Jacques-Louis David, <i>Distribution of the Eagles</i> , 1810, oil on canvas, 610 x 931cm Musée National du Château Versailles, Paris	106
Figure 42	François Rude, <i>Departures of the Volunteers</i> , c.1835, North East Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	107
Figure 43	View of the Champs-Élysées, taken from the Arc de Triomphe, showing the Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries gardens, where the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel can be seen against the backdrop of the Louvre Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	108
Figure 44	Antoine Etex, <i>Peace</i> , c.1835, North West Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	109
Figure 45	Antoine Etex, <i>Resistance</i> , c. 1835, South West Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	110
Figure 46	The Census Frieze from the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus c. 100 BC, Musée du Louvre, Paris Photograph courtesy of www.louvre.fr	111

Figure 47	Georges Jacquot, Detail from <i>The Departure of the Armies</i> , 1833-36, frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London	111
Figure 48	Sylvestre Brun, Detail from <i>The Departure of the Armies</i> , 1834, showing the altar of the Fatherland, frieze on the entablature Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London	112
Figure 49	Medal depicting King Louis-Philippe I and Napoleon in the guise of Roman emperors; the obverse shows the completed Arc de Triomphe, c. 1836	112
Figure 50	François Rude, Detail from <i>The Return of the French Armies</i> , 1833-36, frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London	113
Figure 51	Gabriel Bernard Seurre, Detail from the <i>Return of the French Armies</i> , 1833-36, showing one of the victory arches and the transportation of a statue of the Nile, frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London	113
Figure 52	Louis Caillouette, Detail from the <i>Return of the French Armies</i> , 1833-36, showing the seated personification of Victory at the centre of the procession, frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London	114
Figure 53	Arch of Septimius Severus, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	115
Figure 54	Arch of Constantine, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	115
Figure 55	Vendôme Column, Place Vendôme, Paris Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009	116
Figure 56	Trajan's Column, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	117

Figure 57	Detail of the external frieze, the Vendôme Column, Place Vendôme, Paris Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	118
Figure 58	Detail of the external frieze, Trajan’s Column, Rome Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009	118
Figure 59	Jacques-Louis David, <i>Napoleon Crossing the Alps at the Great Saint-Bernard Pass</i> , 1800, oil on canvas, 259 x 221 cm Musée National du Château de Malmaison Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009	119
Figure 60	A plan for French building work in Trajan’s Forum, including lateral stairways and a fountain, 1813 Archives Nationales, Paris	120

Maps

Map 1	Map of Paris c. 1800, with locations highlighted	121
Map 2	Map of Rome c.1800, with locations highlighted	122

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations occur in the text

<i>Description</i>	For the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i>
<i>Frontispiece</i>	For the <i>Frontispiece</i> for the <i>Description de l'Égypte</i>
<i>Gaul</i>	For the <i>Dying Gaul</i>
<i>Fellah</i>	For the Fontaine du Fellah
<i>Victoire</i>	For the Fontaine de la Victoire
<i>Arc</i>	Arc de Triomphe
<i>Carrousel</i>	Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel
<i>Triumph</i>	For the <i>Triumph of Napoleon</i>
<i>Volunteers</i>	For the <i>Departure of the Volunteers</i>

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to discuss the influence of antiquity on the art and architecture produced during the reign of Emperor Napoleon 1ST. I will show that the art and architecture produced during this period had definite associative links with antiquity and will explain why certain designs and emblems were especially utilised. The conclusions of my examination will go on to show how this new influence of antiquity informed spatial awareness within the cities of Paris and Rome, and its effect on the creation of Napoleon's new imperial capital. The French were faced with an ideological vacuum after the bloodiness of the Revolution and I will discuss what role antiquity played in the formation of a new cultural identity for France, as they comprehended their new social and political circumstances. Ultimately this study will show how antiquity was plundered, not only for its physical remains, but for the cultural memories it engendered and how both the physical and metaphysical were used to create and support Napoleon's imperial regime.

To examine the impact of antiquity I will use specific artistic and architectural examples from Napoleonic Paris that demonstrate the influence of two ancient civilisations – Egypt and Rome. These have been chosen due to the French invasions, led by Napoleon to Italy and Egypt, prior to his elevation as emperor. Chapter I will show how the results of the Italian campaign of 1796 were displayed in Paris. The discussion will centre around specific examples, the *Laocoön*, the *Belvedere Apollo*, the *Dying Gaul* and from Venice the *Quadriga* of San Marco's Basilica. The examples have been chosen for the honour Napoleon bestowed on them, and thus will indicate the role they played in

creating the first imperial and national collection in the Louvre. To fully comprehend this the theory of the Gaze will be discussed and will help to elucidate how antiquity's artistic production was used by the Napoleonic regime and what associations it were hoped would be garnered by displaying it in this manner.

Chapter II will move the discussion onto the subsequent chronological invasion, the campaign to Egypt in 1798. The discussion will begin by contextualising the importance of this campaign in forging a new cultural identity for Paris by utilising the cultural memories that ancient Egypt represented, as expressed by Jan Assmann. This will then inform the discussion of several key examples that demonstrate how this campaign was presented in Paris, firstly as culturally significant artwork: the Frontispiece of the *Description de l'Égypte*. This piece shows how the invasion was fashioned into a resonant stepping stone for Napoleon's imperial dreams and demonstrates the use of certain imagery for specific propagandic purposes. The discussion will then move onto the architectural translation of this expedition in Paris. It will focus on two very different but significantly Egyptianising fountains that glorify the emperor and his campaign. The aesthetic and ideological success of these fountains will then be measured. The chapter will conclude with a brief digest of the erection of the Luxor obelisk in the Place de la Concorde and the enduring effect of both ancient Egyptian history and cultivated Napoleonic identity on Paris and its people.

The final chapter will then continue this discussion of the changing imperial identity of Paris under Napoleon's reign. It will discuss the building and restoration works that took place in Paris and Rome that helped to fashion these two cities into the modern and ancient capitals of Napoleon's empire. The Parisian monuments that will be

examined include the Arc de Triomphe, the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and the Vendôme column. The first two monuments have been chosen for their obvious Classical connotations and their position within the city. Their location on the Champs-Élysées axis that runs from the Louvre will be discussed as the back bone that created a precinct of power in Paris. The importance of Napoleon's gaze from the Arc de Triomphe, thus uniting this space will then lead into a discussion of the Vendôme column, and the gaze of the emperor as the crown of this monument. The similarities with Trajan's column will take us into the final stages of this chapter, and the French works in Rome. The excavations, restorations and renovations that the French planned in Trajan's Forum and the Forum Romanum will be discussed in order to demonstrate Napoleon's interest in the city and the historical associations he could increase by ruling it. Such works will highlight how the French used the ancient associations that imbue the physical remains of Rome and what they hoped to gain from restoring them in a uniquely French style. The works in Rome will also highlight similarities with the Napoleonic works in Paris. The analysis of these similarities will demonstrate finally how antiquity influenced the art and architecture of Napoleon's reign.

This study will concentrate on the cultural ramifications for Paris and the French people that the invasions of Italy and Egypt ultimately had. This is an under-researched topic, and although recent studies of Napoleon are beginning to look more at specific periods of his life and their reception rather than chronological biographies, there has been very little study of his reception in terms of his association with an ancient imperial legacy.¹ Many works have focussed on Napoleon's time in Egypt and his Italian expedition, and skirt the issues of imperial heritage and identity as a cause or motivation,

¹ For examples of period specific biographies see: Alexander 2001; Englund 2004; Dwyer 2007

but very few relate these expeditions to the way Paris subsequently grew as an imperial capital in the latter years of the empire.² This study is not an historical analysis of Napoleon's war tactics or political manoeuvres.³ Neither does it offer the perspective of an art historian on the artistic and architectural produce of this period. It simply wishes to show how antiquity directly influenced the art and architecture of Napoleon's reign and demonstrate how such influences and ideas began the process of reforming shattered French identity in the years following the Revolution.

² For examples: Huet's chapter in Edwards 1999:53-70; Boime 1990 suggests such links in early chapters, Steiner 1981; Strathern 2008 ; Englund 2004; Alexander 2001 similarly skirt around the issue of ancient emperors and generalise imperial connexions with heroes of antiquity such as Alexander.

³ For example see: Barnett 1997

CHAPTER I

ANTIQUITY VISITS PARIS

'What a great people were the Romans... not Caesar only but some of the succeeding Emperors, such as Titus, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius...The Romans were always great'

(de Bourrienne 1836:374)

This chapter focuses on the cultural repercussions for Paris of the 1796 French invasion of Italy. I will investigate why Classical sculptures were taken from Italy and how they were displayed as part of a new French national collection in the Louvre. The significance of this presentation of artworks will be considered with reference to four key looted pieces, the *Laocoön*, the *Dying Gaul*, and the *Belvedere Apollo* taken from Rome and the *Quadriga* from Venice. These case studies are followed by a discussion of their placement in Paris and the effect this had on Napoleon's planned image for the city. Through this chapter I will show how ancient art became the foundation of a new imperial and national appreciation of art in France and the subsequent repercussions in the wider European community.

I have chosen to concentrate on accounts of the removal and impact of these artworks as reported in British newspapers rather than more obvious French reports for two key reasons. Firstly, the British had a vested interest in France. The history of these two nations' conflicts is well documented, but the British as the instigators of the Grand Tour had lost travel and educational opportunities due to French intervention in Italy. This sense of loss, whilst outside the scope of my study, can still inform my discussion. More importantly, Napoleon heavily censored the French press during his reign, so working with British reportage presents a better opportunity to explore the impact of

Napoleon's cultural undertaking than contemporary French press makes available. The British press were regularly sent Parisian papers and therefore had adequate sources, when combined and relative publishing freedoms to read between the lines and present ample conclusions concerning Napoleon's activities. A particularly interesting publication, for example, is the *Morning Chronicle*, which often stated it was using Parisian articles. It was a radical paper for this period, criticising the British government and not unsympathetic towards the French regime. Using British papers therefore gives us a wider range of opinion and a good sense as to how French journalistic reports informed European perceptions of Napoleon's 'conquest' of antiquity.

The French invaded Italy with the intention of driving the Austrians out. The Republic's ongoing war with Austria had made it an inevitable political step: Italy was a wealthy prize and French occupation would destabilise Hapsburg dominance in Europe. Under the guise of a liberating force the Directory invaded in 1796.¹ Bonaparte later addressed the Municipality of Milan, concluding: 'accept this...as a pledge from the people of France of the ardent desire to see you free and happy' (*Telegraph* August 23 1796). Translated for an Anglophone audience in the *Telegraph*, it is clear the notion of 'freeing' Italy was used as justification to the Italians and the wider European community for the invasion. Similar terminology is offered as justification for looting. McClellan cites the contemporary source, Luc Barbier, an escort for the looted pieces, describing their arrival as 'they too are delivered to the home of the arts and of genius, the land of liberty and equality, the French Republic' (1999:116). During the Revolution the French

¹ The Directory was the executive body that oversaw appointments onto the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Ancients, the new two tier system that came into power following Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety and the Terror. It passed its new constitution in 1795 and was overthrown in a coup by Bonaparte in 1799.

people had united under the motto '*liberté, égalité, fraternité*', and freed themselves from the bonds of the medieval style estates. Gregory Curtis describing the French looting of Rome summarises a popular belief at the time: it was their new social and political 'freedom', compared to the enduring monarchies, for example, of Britain that made France the 'rightful heir of the masterpieces of antiquity' (2004:56). The idea of French created freedom is therefore twofold. The new-found liberation in France and the formation of a modern Republic is thus rewarded by the opportunity to loot artworks from the ancient Roman Republic. Concurrently the French present themselves as a liberating force on the ground and so are freeing the 'Italian' people and their ancient possessions simultaneously.²

Looting was inscribed as a contractual right for the French. Each time an armistice was signed with different city states during the campaign it included a clause regarding the claiming of artistic trophies. The practicalities were simple: Napoleon requested a group of experts from Paris to decide which pieces were worthy to become the first artistic collection in the Louvre. The experts employed local specialists and somewhat perversely used guidebooks designed for Grand Tourists to scour Italy and collate a collection, and in the process changed the face of European tourism. The chosen pieces were then boxed up and sent to Paris. Sculpture was the most popular medium but tapestries and books were also taken. The confiscation caused a sensation across Europe, as nothing on this scale of removal had been seen before. British newspaper reports contained detailed lists, translated from Parisian papers as to what was taken and how it was transported. Such reports created a unity of purpose from the French and the sowed

² 'Italian' is a difficult term as there was no Italy in the modern sense. Here it means the collection of city states the French invaded. For a discussion of the formation of modern Italy: Duggan 2007; Gregory 2001

the early seeds of the notion of a collection of works that belonged together, in which the *Laocoön* and *Belvedere Apollo* took special place.³

To understand why so much was looted from Rome and then displayed in the Louvre I propose to turn to the theory of the ‘Gaze’. Cavarallo’s 2001 work describes this as a ‘form of power associated with the eye and sense of sight’ (2001:131). With reference to works of art this power creates a form of communication between the viewer and the subject, which can affect both parties alike. In terms of my study the collection and presentation of art in the Louvre could suggest a desire of the ruling Directory, and later Napoleon, to give power to the viewing public. In the empowering ideal of this theory the watcher while viewing gains control of the landscape and its subject. By organising the power of the Gaze the viewer then creates and defines a ‘scene’ and assigns meaning to the subject. Rule under the monarchy had bestowed power on a limited few; the Revolution had turned to Terror where once again epistemological power was limited and abused in an illogical reality that discouraged the power of the individual to enact change. Revolutionary iconoclasm led to the destruction of ‘seditious’ images and many important pieces were lost.⁴ Under the Directory’s influence power and art was restored to the people through the display of artworks at the Louvre. Containing the ancient sculptures within the walls of the old palace created a melting pot of powerful ideology as those who viewed the antiquities were given power over them and their new setting. Walking within the Louvre palace would have been impossible for the ordinary French citizen ten years earlier. Now its rooms and corridors were accessible and more

³ Such a list was published in: *Oracle and Public Advertiser* 22 June 1797 and *Morning Chronicle* 18 June 1796. *Craftsman or Say’s Weekly Journal* 16 November 1799 took more of an interest in the technicalities of removing the monuments.

⁴ For more about the art, iconoclasm and the Revolution: Crow 1995; Gamboni 1997

importantly could be viewed as a national space, backdrop for a revival of state order and the state's triumph. If the Gaze gave power and control, the ordinary French viewer now had power and control over their own recent history and over the sculptured products of an ancient society. Such a combination then enriches a citizen's experience and self-fashioning of identity.

Margaret Olin's discussion of Lacan's interpretation of the Gaze moves this theory on, 'the gaze then, corresponds to desire...for self-completion through another' (Nelson and Shiff 2003:325). During the Revolution, French society had been turned upside down: the Church disbanded, the monarchy murdered and the populace left to turn on one another. The spring months of 1794 were known as the 'Terror' when thousands of the higher echelons of society were arrested and beheaded across France. The country had in a few short months erased its former monarchical identity and created an ideological vacuum. If we turn to the Gaze theory with these facts in mind, I suggest we can see the desire to control ancient sculpture as a desire to complete the ideological picture. Controlling ancient sculpture within the Louvre helped society to comprehend the ancient past and thus conceptualise a new modern identity.

The Gaze, however, does not always translate so altruistically. As presented by Michel Foucault and discussed by Cavallaro, the Gaze becomes indistinguishable from the operations of power: 'the powerful advertise their authority by putting themselves on display, and thus awing the impotent masses into submission' (2001:132). During Napoleon's reign the Louvre became the Musée Napoleon and those who looked on its interior would see his dominance and power.⁵ His victories in Italy had allowed the looting to take place and the renaming of the museum meant that this was abundantly

⁵ For the development of the Louvre into the Musée Napoleon: Gould 1965

clear. The Louvre during this time in Gaze terms turned from an emblem of social power supported by the freedom garnered by the Revolution, to a symbol of imperial glory. The case studies I will now discuss show how the antiquities supported this imperial regime, allowing monuments of ancient Rome and Napoleon to jointly symbolise the ‘other’ through which France could contemplate its new self.

My decision to focus primarily on sculpture is due to the fact that this artistic medium retains the clearest connexions with Classical antiquity. The selected artworks here showcase in detail what type of support the French might have wanted to garner from the Classical past. Sculpture is the most commonly discovered media of ancient art. Furthermore, it was an excellent overstated trophy for the French looters, since they found it difficult to remove frescoes whole, although canvases were removed from their frames and rolled up for transportation. Only sculptures could be removed and deposited in an undamaged and unaltered state. Such limited alteration meant a direct link was preserved with Rome and its history. Additionally the nature of sculpture makes it the most solid and tactile media, and when portraying human form it offers a direct relationship between past and present: in effect it allows the past to be re-imagined in ‘our’ image.⁶ In terms of the Gaze too it creates the most vivid level of communication as its dimensional presence makes it more conspicuous and therefore more arresting. Critics such as Walter Benjamin believe and have argued that sight is tactile and therefore the Gaze is multi-sensory, encompassing the ability to touch. So the ‘need [for] a concrete, materialistic reflection on the things that are closest’ (McCole 1993:246) is particularly

⁶ McClellan comments that the looted statues spoke ‘more loudly and enduringly of his success in war than reports of victorious battles ever could’ (1999:121).

pertinent for determining exactly what control and power ancient statues could offer the French people.⁷

Case Study I: The *Laocoön*

The Laocoön (Figure 1) was discovered in 1506 on the Esquiline hill and moved by Pope Julius II to the Vatican: it was transported to Paris in 1799.⁸ Its inclusion as part of the French war booty was clearly due to its famous associations. On its discovery it was immediately identified as a depiction of Laocoön corresponding with a lost yet distinguished statue described in Pliny's *Natural History*. Pliny describes it 'in the palace of the Emperor Titus' (36:320) immediately investing the piece with an imperial connection. The mythical story of Laocoön was also well known from Book II of Virgil's *Aeneid*, 'as the sea-snakes, Glided through the sand straight for the Laocoön' (II: 252-3). Identification implicating two key ancient literary works and the marble group's discovery at the heart of Rome invested the statue with strong Classical connections and made it almost unique among its counterparts. The reference to the *Aeneid* creates connections with Augustus: such associations pepper Napoleon's reign.⁹ Visual examples included medals; one such example celebrates Napoleon's victory in Istria and features the temple of Augustus, restored by the French at Pola, on the reverse (Figure 2). By glorifying this repaired temple Napoleon suggests that his victories allow the remnants of the ancient Roman Empire to be physically repaired. This supplements the suggestion that France freed Italy, clearly Napoleon also wanted to conserve its former imperial glory, a theme we will see develop in Chapter III. The *Laocoön's* connections to

⁷ Walter Benjamin discussed and quoted in: McCole 1993

⁸ *The Laocoön* is currently in the Belvedere courtyard at the Vatican museums.

⁹ For a discussion of these associations: Huet in Edwards 2007: 53-69

Augustus, through its evocation of the Aeneid, must have been one factor in ensuring its trip to Paris.

The statue's status was undiminished in the eighteenth century; Johann Winckelmann's appreciation was published in the 1764 work *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* and this was later translated and quoted in several English newspapers in 1797.¹⁰ Despite the lack of contemporary editorialising the inclusion of this piece in the British press at this point is surely a reaction to the French invasion and shows the interest in the *Laocoön* that the French were rousing. The statue evokes a common emotional response from the viewer by displaying torturous moments before death. Even if an observer does not know the history they can identify with common humanity – he is a man fighting to save his children. The display of physical exertion and the presence of the identifiable 'family' group make this a poignant scene: 'where there is the greatest agony there is also great beauty'.¹¹ The pathos, humanity, and associated history make it a masterpiece.¹² It is these elements, particularly as Napoleon was desperate for a son and heir, coupled with its artistic merit that makes it an obvious candidate for a trip to Paris.

The history attached to the statue also makes it important for this study. The *Laocoön's* close associations with Roman emperors infuse this piece with an imperial legacy that Napoleon has inherited by claiming it. He in turn glorifies the statue in its own apartment in the Musée Napoleon and celebrates it on an 1804 medal (Figure 3). In

¹⁰ For example see *General Evening Post* 7th Oct 1797. It does not seem to be part of a serialisation and its inclusion is mysterious, the *General Evening Post* was published three times a week and this is the only reference to Winckelmann throughout this month.

¹¹ Winckelmann as published in the *General Evening Post* 7th Oct 1797. The same account can be found in *The True Britton* 9 Oct 1797 and *The Star* 12 Oct 1797.

¹² For concise appreciation: Haskell & Penny 1981: 243-247

minting such a medal he solidifies all the mythic and ancient associations and demonstrates that he has contained them in the walls of the ‘Salle de Laocoön’. If the associations were purely mythic Napoleon perhaps would garner very little ideological support from the statue. The presence and subsequent juxtaposition between mythic and real history, both ancient and modern is in fact what makes this a particularly pertinent ‘trophy of conquest’.¹³

The imperial links with the statue are important but so is its subject. By glorifying a depiction of a priest who saw the true nature of the Trojan horse and the horrors it would bring, the French show their superiority, as soldiers and tacticians, to the ancient civilisation and eventual founders of Rome, who ignored Laocoön. A London paper reports on the growing general interest in the Aeneid in Paris: ‘A fragment of the translation of the fourth Aeneid, by Delille, has been read in a literary society, and received with distinguished applause’ (*Evening Mail* 24 June 1799). A memoir of Napoleon’s life tells us that during the Italian campaign he honoured the ‘genius of Virgil... an obelisk was erected to the memory of Virgil in the midst of a wood’ (Arnault & Pankoucke 1829:72). This shows that Vergil’s work is respected and valued and Napoleon rather than simply utilising the connotations such a statue gives to his reign, has a wider appreciation of the history, and in particular the kind of ideology of historical destiny, that the *Laocoön* group and story can represent.

¹³ ‘Trophy of Conquest’ is a term coined by Gould :1965

Case Study II: The *Apollo Belvedere*

My second case study and the most famous sculpture removed from Rome is the *Apollo Belvedere* (Figure 4). It was taken from the Vatican in 1797.¹⁴ Mystery shrouds the origins of the statue, yet it has always attracted admiration and acclaim.¹⁵ Winckelmann's prominent criticism sums it up as '[a] Statue more superior to any other Statues of that Deity'.¹⁶ He also credits this depiction of Apollo for eliciting a more emotional response: 'I forgot the whole universe...from admiration I passed to extacy...I felt myself transported to Delos' (*General Evening Post* 7 October 1797).¹⁷ Such overt appreciation published retrospectively in several British newspapers at the time is a good indication of contemporary responses towards the statue and hints at what the French hoped to achieve in terms of cultural resource, by claiming it. The strong connection Winckelmann feels to the 'past', made more plausible by his status as an art historian, would be an ideologically important strengthening energy in Napoleon's regime and in his fashioning of a new empire.

We have evidence Napoleon valued this statue more highly than any of the other looted from Italy during this period and was conscious of the glory and fame associated with relocating the statue to Paris. An anonymous sketch depicts him touring the gallery and showing the *Apollo* off to his retinue (Figure 5). He also placed a plaque by the statue crediting himself with bringing it to Paris, showing the pride he took in this

¹⁴ The Apollo Belvedere is currently in the Vatican museums.

¹⁵ For discussions of this: Weiss 1969; Eitner 1970; Haskell & Penny 1981.

¹⁶ Quoted from the *General Evening Post* 7 October 1797 which reproduced a short section of Winckelmann's work.

¹⁷ 'Extacy' is the spelling used in this particular newspaper's translation of Winckelmann's work.

particular acquisition: as he effectively inscribed his name at the statue's feet.¹⁸ The same pride is evident during his reign, publicised in the minting of a decorative medal in 1804 (Figure 6). The reverse is a perspective view of the Salle de L'Apollon, the *Belvedere Apollo* standing at the centre. The detail of this medal suggests close links are being nurtured between Napoleon and the history of the *Apollo*, links that are more than simple pride. The scene depicted is attributed to the Musée Napoleon rather than the Louvre which redefines the home of the ancient sculpture, placing it at the heart of a new Napoleonic space. By advertising his acquisition of the statue, its arrival in France and its placement in the collection bearing his name, the *Apollo* becomes testimony to Napoleon's achievements.

The inspirational qualities of the *Apollo* are also important as subsequently the below. The *Apollo's* ability to inspire artists and historians at this time is important for its enduring significance. The statue represents a perfect depiction of immortal youth for Winckelmann, and is a useful model for artistic study, presenting both an ideal and a model for contemporary improvement. We can see echoes of the *Apollo* in Canova's 1806 statue of *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* (Figure 7).¹⁹ Accessorised with a cape but entirely naked the similarities with the *Belvedere* are obvious. However, Napoleon rejected the statue, possibly affronted by his own youthful nudity and faintly feminine

¹⁸ The inscription read 'La statue d'Apollon qui s'élève sur ce piédestal trouvée à Antium sur la fin du XV siècle, placée au Vatican par Jules II au commencement du XVIe siècle, conquise en l'an V de la République par l'armée d'Italie sous les ordres du général Bonaparte, a été fixée le 21 germinal au VIII, première année de son consulat'

Translation: 'The statue of the Apollo which stands on this pedestal was found in Antium at the end of the 15th century, placed in the Vatican by Julius II at the beginning of the 16th century, conquered in the fifth year of the Republic by the army of Italy under the command of General Bonaparte was fixed on the 21 Germinal Year 8, the first year of his consulate'. (Lavallée, Caraffe, Augustin: 1814:12)

For discussion of this plaque: Haskell & Penny 1982, Eitner 1970.

¹⁹ It was commissioned by Napoleon in 1803, he later forbade its exhibition in the Louvre in 1810. His reaction would not have pleased Marie-Louise; Napoleon's second wife was closely associated with Canova. For reaction to her depiction as *Concordia* see: Hardwick 2003:45

representation, which raised questions about his sexuality, and he refused to display it in the Louvre on its arrival in Paris in 1810.²⁰ The statue, ironically, later became a ‘trophy of conquest’ for the British government who presented it to the Duke of Wellington for his efforts in defeating Napoleon.²¹ A similar public reaction to a nude bronze statue of one of Napoleon’s favourite generals, Desaix, which was ridiculed on its public unveiling in 1810, suggests that general re-imagining of contemporary figures in a Classical guise was unsuccessful.²² In such a depiction Napoleon had none of the historical mystery that the Apollo Belvedere was shrouded in. We have seen that the historical connections of these statues are an important part of their attraction to the French looters. However, when presented with a modern nude with no ancient or historical associations, that depicts a contemporary well known figure, modern sensibilities come into play. Napoleon garners no historical associations from such a portrayal, in fact the complete opposite: he leaves himself vulnerable to rumour and ridicule.

Case Study III: *The Dying Gaul*

The final marble sculpture in this discussion is the *Dying Gaul* (Figure 8).²³ Described by Beard and Henderson as ‘one of the canonical pieces of ancient sculpture’ (2001:160), its implications for Napoleon are intriguing. It depicts a warrior moments before death and was taken from the Capitoline collections in 1797 and brought to Paris

²⁰ For suggest of this unhappiness: Boime 1990:641; and Huet in Edwards 1999:60. For a fuller discussion: O’Brien 2004

²¹ The statue still stands in the stairwell of the Duke’s London residence, Apsley House.

²² The bronze statue of Desaix was placed in the Place des Victoires and was taken down shortly before the Restoration: Pugin 1829:133

²³ The statue was acquired by Clement XII from the Ludovisi collections in 1734 and returned to Rome in 1816. It is currently in the Capitoline Museum, Rome as MC 747. For ease it will be referred to from this point as the *Gaul*.

in the same convoy as the *Belvedere Apollo* and *Laocoön*. As a well known pan-European subject copies were used as training models for all students at the British Royal Academy, and in 1810 the statue was the subject for the Oxford Newdigate poetry contest. This statue therefore was not only a beautiful piece; it was an enduring icon and inspiration for the next generation of artists and writers.

The national identity of the *Gaul* makes it an obvious choice for the French looters, as they were able to repatriate him to his symbolical homeland.²⁴ The statue commemorates Attalid victories over the Galatians, but I believe the fact it celebrated a Gaul's bravery, in a manner that made it a pan-European icon would have given it particular appeal to the French in collating their first national collection. The collection housed in the Louvre, as I will discuss, came to represent national French identity during this era, it seems obvious that the heroic *Gaul* should therefore be part of the collection. The military history of Gauls and Romans was problematic for Napoleonic propaganda; the Gauls sacked Rome in 390 BC but Julius Caesar conquered much of Gaul in 58 BC. The celebration of this Gallic soldier in contemporary Rome, and subsequently in Paris, unites the two hostile nations. By resolving the tension between the two countries Napoleon strengthens historical links and provides some justification for utilising ancient Roman symbols in his regime, without the repercussions or questions concerning what France's 'subject' place in the ancient empire really was.

Like the *Laocoön* the *Gaul* depicts beauty and horror simultaneously. The realisation of his own fate and silent preparations for death make this statue more worthy than the *Belvedere Apollo* of the description 'Sublime', the importance of which for

²⁴ It seems the term 'looters' was coined by the British press; Napoleon viewed his forces as simply fulfilling peace treaties by removing statues and artwork.

architecture will be developed in Chapter II. The same emotions that are evoked by Sublime architecture are stirred here as a viewer feels compelled to gaze upon the mortally wounded figure. The appeal of the *Dying Gaul* then is multifaceted. Firstly the national pride such a piece engenders is appealing to the generic French looter. Yet the artistic merit, fulfilling the Sublime criteria, makes it interesting from an artistic viewpoint and therefore a good exhibit for a museum dedicated to the appreciation of art. This suggests that the simultaneous amalgamation of ancient history, familiar symbolism and artistic renown created an irresistible combination for the looters. This piece was not simply a trophy for the French but represented their national identity that they were both rescuing, in bringing the *Gaul* home, and developing by honouring the artistic mastery of the statue at the heart of their national collection.

Case Study IV: The Venetian *Quadriga*

For the final example of looting I turn to Venice and the bronze *Quadriga*, taken from San Marco's Piazza in 1797 on Napoleon's orders (Figure 9).²⁵ This example highlights a particularly vindictive case of looting and shows that the French were not solely concerned with collating a national collection in the Louvre, but were happy to remove anything they could carry that had ancient associations. The *Morning Chronicle* describes the worth of all the looted Italian statues as 'dearer than the soil itself' to Italy, but the removal of four bronze horses from the doorway of the Basilica of San Marco

²⁵ The horses were attributed to Lysippos and had decorated the Procuratie Nuove since 1204. After the fall of Napoleon they were returned to Venice in 1816. In the 1980's the original horses were removed and placed inside the Basilica to protect them from the elements. A replica set now stands in their original position.

represented the removal of the Venetians' pride.²⁶ Napoleon resided in this square when visiting Venice during the occupation so the *Quadriga* and its significance would have been known to him.²⁷ The *Quadriga* had crowned the basilica since 1204 when, ironically, they themselves were looted from Constantinople. They were proof to the Venetians of their previous power and achievements. The French in removing them demonstrated their power over Italy and the ancient world in one fell swoop. By claiming the *Quadriga* they associated themselves once more with a deep sense of history and triumph. In garnering support for their own newly developing national identity the French simultaneously deprived the Venetians of theirs.

The removal from Venice was done in the style of a triumph. A contemporary engraving shows crowds filling the square to witness the French procession, with *Quadriga* clearly visible (Figure 10). This procession was greeted with glory in Paris as Berthault's engraving shows (Figure 11). The Italian marbles were carried alongside it, but only the *Quadriga* was free from packing cases; a visible participant in the 'Triumph'. The engraving we have from Paris shows a collection of exotic animals: dromedaries follow the horse-drawn carts and lions can be seen in cages. The *Quadriga* stands tall on a cart: horses drawn by even more horses – the Venetian team can be seen as both captive and triumphant, honoured and participating in the parade. The lavish excess of animals demonstrates the strength of the French: confining and controlling these wild beasts and organising them in a sedate procession, it is a task completed by victors. One could argue such a scene imbues the *Quadriga* with animalistic and savage

²⁶ *Morning Chronicle* 3 August 1802.

²⁷ Napoleon also spent time renovating the buildings of the square to form one giant interconnecting residence by demolishing a church. For discussions of Venice and Napoleon during this period : Flag 1853; Lane 1973

qualities, encouraging a reading whereby a viewer sees the control of these captive horses and the history they represent as comparable to taming a lion. It shows the Parisian citizens the struggle that has brought these pieces to the city which makes the glory of their forces all the greater; they have not only captured them but made the statues, the produce of an ancient civilisation, parade at their command.

The *Quadriga*, however can also Gaze back, and whilst made redundant by means of its position on the procession, the same procession provides it with a new platform and an element of authority. The visual aspects of the parade benefit from application of the Gaze theory: the Parisians were simultaneously being shown the glory and controlling nature of the regime and participating in the scenario whereby the nature of the conquered objects was transformed. The arrival coincided with the anniversary of the fall of Robespierre; the entrance of these ancient pieces to the new ‘museum’ was therefore linked with the fall of the old regime. The procession thus represented a powerful ideological mix of national freedom and glory combined with the celebration of new life after the constricting months of the Terror. This triumph was also an act of massive propaganda. It was a visually stunning procession through Paris. The deployment of oak garlands and tricolours swathing the carts made clear the conjoining of ancient and modern symbolism of lives saved and citizenship renewed.²⁸ Such combined imagery suggests the French were crowning themselves the saviours of the ancient statues they bore while creating a new visual identity for the present, that all of Paris could see.²⁹

While the French decided where to place the *Quadriga*, the British press rumoured stories that the horses would be harnessed to a gilt chariot, driven by the

²⁸ See: McClellan 1999:123

²⁹ See: McClellan 1999:132

Goddess of Liberty and set them on a pedestal in the Place de la Revolution.³⁰ The ideological potency of this Place will be discussed in Chapter II, but this space was closely connected with both the people and the power of the head of state.³¹ Plans that would allow the *Quadriga* to stand in this space show how highly the horses were valued. Popular contemporary thought attributed the horses to various periods of history. On 16 August 1798, at the height, we might suspect of British concerns about revolution and imperial crisis, an article in the *Oracle and Public Advertiser* claimed they were ‘cast originally in honour of the monster Nero’.³² The implications clearly create a comparison between Napoleon and Nero while fixing the idea that the current French regime was decaying as Nero’s imperial regime had: at the hands of insane and over-ambitious leaders.

Several days later the same paper describes the journey the horses took from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, on to Venice and finally into Paris.³³ The breadth of historical change, imperial growth and collapse associated with these pieces makes them powerful symbols for the regime and its enemies. The *Quadriga* for Napoleon clearly represents the full force of pure historical power and by moving the group once more he now associates himself with the successive civilisations who have attempted to literally harness the horses for political gain.

³⁰ See: *Oracle and Public Advertiser* 20 August 1798. This later became the Place de la Concorde.

³¹ This area had hosted an equestrian statue of Louis XV before the Revolution. It became the Place de la Revolution and contained a guillotine where Marie-Antoinette and Robespierre among others were executed. Under the Directory it was renamed the Place de la Concorde. Various plans during Napoleon’s reign did not come to fruition, for example a Liberty monument crowned with the *Quadriga*. Under the restored monarchy it was renamed for the Louis XVI the ‘martyred’ king. In 1835 an obelisk was raised here. For exact location see Map 1.

³² See: *Oracle and Public Advertiser* 16 August 1798

³³ See: *Oracle and Public Advertiser* 20 August 1798

The *Quadriga* were finally placed on Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel in the Tuileries garden, and attached to a chariot driven by a winged victory (Figure 12). The history the *Quadriga* represented is fully realised in the structure and decoration of this Roman style triumphal arch. Their crowning presence gives the arch gravitas and clear and direct links to an ancient past that support Napoleon's own triumphs and plans. The arch sits in front of the Louvre, and the decorative *Quadriga* and victory watch over the great palace.³⁴ The arch is flanked by the wings of the Louvre, and undeniably connected with the palace and its collections. From the moment of their entry into Paris the horses were on display. To understand their position and read their impact I turn to the Gaze theory once again. On the Carrousel Arch the *Quadriga* offer a commanding and constantly visible reminder of the strength and power that placed them there. They can be viewed and therefore controlled by their French keepers, but the horses look from a great height towards the Louvre, watching over the visitors and the building. If they represent history, then they seem to give their approval, yet also hint at the impermanence of power and the cynical nature of empires. Napoleon is part of the *Quadriga's* history and is inextricably linked with the various connections, positive and negative this garners. The British connect him to Nero, but ancient Greece Constantinople and Rome, are represented too. Each connection associated with this piece locates him in a parade of empires and rulers. Collectively these various rumours and surmises bolster his reputation and increase his power. The instantaneous return of the *Quadriga* to Venice after Napoleon's defeat shows just how significant the connotations of this piece really were.

³⁴ The Carrousel Arch is situated between the Tuileries Garden and the Louvre. See Map I for details.

Case Study V: Preparing the Louvre

The preparations made at the Louvre to welcome the Italian statues are an important part of this study. I am using this as a way to conclude this chapter as it gives an overall impression of what the classical statues from Rome may have been intended to represent. They were not simply trophies but represented the building blocks for the formation of a new national identity. Beard and Henderson emphasise that the *Laocoön* ‘took pride of place’ (2001:68) in the new Parisian museum yet all the classical statues were placed in good positions as demonstrated in the 1804 decorative medals (Figures 3 and 6). To understand how this was perceived abroad I suggest we turn to contemporary British newspapers. These used various Parisian papers as guides in order to follow the movement of the *Laocoön* and *Apollo Belvedere* across Europe and reported on their new lodgings: ‘They are to be received in Paris in triumph, and lodged in the gallery... till a magnificent temple which is to be erected is ready to receive them’ (*Observer*, 19 November 1797).³⁵ Although a temple was never built parts of the Louvre were redesigned to include colonnades and skylights. Rooms were renovated so ‘that the light shall be thrown into the room in such a manner, that the statues shall be seen to better advantage...than they were at Rome’ (*Evening Mail*, 24 June 1799). The *Observer* calculated the cost of moving the collection to Paris was 150,000 francs.³⁶ Such consideration and expense suggests the pieces were viewed as more than war trophies but were now French possessions ready to serve new ideological purposes. If we now reframe Curtis’s suggestion that the French are the rightful heirs to antiquity we can see the truth of this: the French were dutiful recipients, preparing a suitable environment to

³⁵ For analysis of this see: McClellan 1999:150

³⁶ The *Observer* is not specific about the breakdown of costs.

care for the statues.³⁷ In displaying them afresh in renovated suites the French are reinvigorating these pieces: dusting off the glory and fame associated with them and rebranding it to support their agenda.

McClellan suggests that the Louvre took on a more military air during this time of preparation.³⁸ A contemporary painter Baltard wrote that the museum's 'precious contents are recompense for the lives and blood of our fellow citizens' (2002:75).³⁹ This perhaps suggests that the Directory were attempting to show their citizens that their endurance of yet more fighting had been appreciated and the statues were their 'recompense'. This marries with the idea presented at the beginning of this chapter that the presentation of these pieces in the Louvre, in terms of the Gaze, offered the French viewer some control over their past and history. Under Napoleon's command the emphasis of this idea is shifted as the Museum came to represent his military triumph. A British paper using Parisian sources says 'All ranks are invited and encouraged to view the monuments of art' (*Morning Chronicle* 3 August 1802). This suggests the Louvre was not simply for the educated classes who might appreciate 'art' more but as an extensive and decorative war memorial: to help everyone to contemplate their losses but more importantly the gains they now controlled.⁴⁰ In this way the citizens could also be encouraged to engage with and accept the emerging national and imperial ideology and thus position themselves conceptually within the regime.

This idea seeped across the Channel: in 1802 a reviewer in the *Morning Chronicle* described the Louvre's exhibits as a 'national collection' and bemoans the British have no

³⁷ See: Curtis 2004:56

³⁸ McClellan 1999:121

³⁹ Quoted in Barkan & Bush 2002:57

⁴⁰ Several smaller galleries were planned around France: *Morning Chronicle* 9 September 1801. For the role of the emerging role of the Louvre and Musée Napoleon: Gould 1965; McClellan 1999

such compilation. The museum also acted as the stage for a showcase for national industry during this period.⁴¹ Annual fetes were held in the Louvre courtyard and manufacturers sold their goods from specially made stalls.⁴² We can see from this how iconography and ideology were being combined into a potent mix – the antique, the political, the imperial, the civic and the national identities all played a part in the theatre of the Louvre, with daily performances for all visitors. The fete in 1802 coincided with celebrations declaring Napoleon consul for life. Although there is no evidence to suggest he attended such displays or fetes his connection with the Louvre became stronger during his reign. He appointed Denon as Director General in 1803; he had accompanied the Egyptian campaign and witnessed the arrival of the looted artwork.⁴³ After his appointment he supervised the rearrangement of the Grand Gallery and modifications including skylights and colonnaded walkways.

British reportage of Parisian events was often ambivalent, as we might expect. The radical *Morning Chronicle* bemoans the fact that ancient statues are separated from ‘their connection’.⁴⁴ If ‘connection’ is with Italy, this is geographically correct. However I have shown that the historical connections of these pieces were intact. The connections needed to be there if the pieces were to be useful for the new regime. As we have seen a statue paying lip service to antiquity was unsuccessful as propaganda for Napoleon’s regime; it was the history of the looted pieces that was crucial to their acceptance and success in France. From the national identity of the *Dying Gaul*, to the celebration of military achievement represented by the *Laocoön* and the subservience of other nations to

⁴¹ *The Morning Chronicle* 3rd August 1802

⁴² Contemporary British reports say the clocks and bonnets on display were of particular interest in 1801: *Morning Chronicle* 28th September 1801

⁴³ See: Denon An XII. For contemporary appreciation of Denon’s role: Gould 1965; McClellan 1999

⁴⁴ *The Morning Chronicle* 3rd August 1802

France encapsulated in the decoration on the Carrousel arch – the Louvre showcased everything the nation could be proud of and provided a necessary backdrop for national identity to be rebuilt. It became a crucial visual representation of Napoleonic power that allowed him to inscribe himself onto French memory and into the annals of ancient history, as witnessed in his treatment of the *Apollo Belvedere*. I have shown the identity of the Louvre was being remade from monarchical palace to a showcase for the products of a new nation's industry and expansion. The Louvre's collections heralded a new era in European artistic appreciation as antiquity was given a new audience and new lease of life. For the first time the Grand Tour was made obsolete as the stars of antiquity were contained in one place. By bringing such impressive and ancient pieces to France Napoleon created a cultural phenomenon, allowing the creation of and reflection on a new identity and imperial ideology for the whole of France.

CHAPTER II

EGYPTOMANIA IN PARIS

“*Europe*” he said “*is but a molehill – all the great reputations have come from Asia*” ’
Napoleon’s opinion on an eastern expedition, recounted by de Bourrienne (1846:77)

The premise for examining the influence of Egyptian art and architecture in Napoleon’s reign comes from his expedition to that country in 1798. The seaborne invasion also carried with it 160 savants intent on exploring and cataloguing Egypt. My discussion will not describe the workings of this expedition or the wars that followed but rather the consequences of these savants’ work. I will examine how their work helped to encourage the cultural interest in Egypt and the artistic movement known as ‘Egyptomania’. This movement will be examined before passing on to the expedition’s findings, firstly ideologically as a way of understanding the recent French past, then artistically as shown in the *Frontispiece* for the *Description de l’Égypte* designed by Denon. The effect of the Egyptian expedition on the architecture of Paris will then be discussed. This will be done through an examination of three monuments: two fountains erected during Napoleon’s rule and an obelisk erected twenty years after his reign had ended. These pieces will show how decorative Egyptian forms and motifs were re-imagined in Paris. It will also indicate how deeply Egyptomania affected Paris both as a mode of imperial propaganda and a source book for reforming national and cultural identity. This chapter will, in this way, work cumulatively to show the effect of specific Egyptian antiquity on the architectural and artistic output of Napoleon’s reign.

The French campaign occurred during a period of increasing interest in Egyptian history and decorative style. French explorers and artists such as Volney and the Comte de Caylus had visited Egypt in the preceding decades and through their own works had helped to create an interest in ancient and modern Egyptian civilisation.¹ It was de Caylus' 1752 work *Recueil d'Antiquités Égyptiennes, Étrusques, Grecques et Romains* that began serious interest in the art and architecture of the ancients within France. He argued that Egypt was the starting point from which all civilisations, architecturally, developed. He hailed the primitiveness of the simple grandeur of Egyptian architecture as a virtue, rather than condemning it as underdeveloped and simplistic. Creative interest in reimagining Egyptian styles was also developing in Rome during the same period. A famous example is Piranesi's use of Egyptian decorative forms and motifs. Evidence for this can be seen in his 1769 designs for the *Caffè degl' Inglesi*, near the Spanish Steps which show a wide ranging Egyptian influence in features such as stone pedestals and friezes to the depiction of delicate flora and fauna (Figure 13). James Curl charts the rise of the Egyptomania in his 1994 work, and comments that Piranesi's work in Rome changed perceptions of Egyptian architecture, 'that the hardness and 'simplicity' of Egyptian buildings were not due to ignorance but deliberate' (1994:94).² This shows how both Italy and France were moving towards a recuperation of the pre-Classical, at a time when the Classical, since Pompeii's 'rediscovery' in 1748, was becoming ever more accessible. It was these early works that laid the basis for 'Egyptomania's' evolution as the creative model for a popular style across Europe.

¹ Volney's work *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* was taken by Napoleon to Egypt

² Although 'Egyptomania' sounds a little frenzied it is a useful term to describe all the different aesthetic influences and resulting artistic and architectural produce relating to ancient Egypt during this period.

In France this style evolved through the work of craftsmen and artists such as cabinet maker, André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) who had begun working with Egyptian forms in the early eighteenth century.³ Young artists such as Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728-99) and Louis-Jean Desprez (1743-1804), benefitted from travelling between Paris and Rome, and took inspiration from both cities. They began to generate designs for eclectic tombs and funerary monuments utilising Egyptian elements and creating a ‘Sublime’ effect.⁴ Curl summarises this aesthetic category as ‘associated with *terror*, *power*, *vastness*... and the ability to stimulate *imagination* and the *emotions*’ (1994:236). The issue of aesthetics stimulating the emotions is one I have previously highlighted in Chapter I concerning looted artwork, and will recur in my discussion below. The late eighteenth century’s growing interest in Egyptian art quickly became fashionable within an increasingly consumerist society, extending into the French aristocracy. Marie-Antoinette commissioned a suite of Egyptianising furniture for Chateau St Cloud, showing that ‘Egyptomania’ was gradually becoming a more widespread phenomena moving out of the domain of intellectual enquiry and becoming part of daily life.

It was on the cusp of this growing interest that Napoleon invaded Egypt, an invasion whose lasting repercussions were as much about cultural politics as they were military and imperial. The results of this expedition, however, concerned not simply a new artistic style, but engrossed scientists, writers and anthropologists. The 160 *savants* who accompanied the expedition and the work they subsequently produced truly began a pan-European obsession: a wide spread interest in the culture, architecture and artistic

³ Boulle used a workshop in the Louvre and produced highly decorated clocks, cabinets and furniture.

⁴ Boullée (1728-99) produced designs for a gigantic sublime cenotaph *Cénotaphe dans le Genre Égyptien* and Desprez (1743-1804) produced designs for tombs which included sarcophagi, sphinxes and Egyptian figures.

style of the ancient Egyptian 'empire'. Publications such as the *Description de L'Égypte*, which will be discussed in more detail later, and discovered artefacts such as the Rosetta stone, helped to make Egypt more accessible to all of Europe, not just the French.⁵ The motives of the military and economic side of the expedition are reasonably clear, however why French imperial artistic culture responded so immediately is more difficult to determine. To help understand this I propose turning to Jan Assmann's reading of Egypt in Western cultural memory. I will explore this in terms of the French expedition to explain why Egyptomania meant so much to France, particularly at the beginning of a new imperial regime.

Assmann suggests understanding cultural memory as being 'our past, it is what we once were' (2006:179); and that people should think of the past in terms of 'what it means for the present and how it continues to exist in it' (2006:180). He also states at the time when 'hieroglyphics had not yet been deciphered... our knowledge of Egypt was nonexistent...As an image, Egypt was the antithesis of the biblical image that determined our own self-image' (2006:180). This has particular resonance for understanding France's *affaire* with Egypt. During the Revolution the church had been dissolved, the royal family murdered and the government of the state irrevocably altered. The Directory that succeeded the Terror was attempting to ensure order and stability in the state that had destroyed its old ideology: 'Revolution' could not continue indefinitely. In this context it seems clear that the idea of powerful, ancient and 'Sublime' Egypt offered a fresh and

⁵ The *Description de l'Égypte* was issued publically between 1809 and 1828. It contained work by many of the *savants* but was primarily supervised by Denon and Jomard. The Rosetta stone was shipped to England where Thomas Young worked on deciphering its contents however it was the French Champollion in 1822 who finally solved the problem.

bare, yet productively resonant set of imperial paradigms which presented one way of ideologically coping.

Assmann sees Egypt as the relic of Biblical fervour at a time when its past was incomprehensible to French historians. Although unable to translate hieroglyphics the history of Egypt was acknowledged as tantalizingly present through physical remains.⁶ Assman sees ‘memories’ of Egypt as a fertile source of foundation ideology that also moves society forward. Having stripped society of the reasons for its existence, the French needed to remake a history that supported their new ambitions. The ancient nature of Egypt, untainted by explanation or Christian overtones was ripe for French reinvention during this period. Fascination with Egypt was not simply to do with decoration but became a way of explaining and justifying the past and supporting the new regime.

Case Study I: The *Frontispiece* for the *Description de l'Égypte*

As the study of and interest in ancient civilisations became more common, the understanding of artistic traditions evolved. To understand how this impacted on art theory, I suggest we take note of two highly influential publications: Benjamin West’s *Discourse to the Students of the Royal Academy* of 1792 and Denon’s introduction to the *Description de l'Égypte*.⁷ West was elected President of the Royal Academy in London and surprisingly supported the Revolution and Bonaparte. His work here acknowledges the ever widening canon of art that young artists should study and includes previously

⁶ Several men had tried to decipher hieroglyphs such as Kircher (1602-80) whose translations later proved to be wildly wide of the mark.

⁷ The *Description de l'Égypte* will be referred to as the *Description* from this point. West highlighted the notion of a global artistic tradition that stretched from India and the Middle East to North and South America, his predecessor Joshua Reynolds believed in a simpler continuous tradition from Italy to Greece. Denon helped to collate the information for the *Description* he also designed the official frontispiece for the first publication. For the significance of these two, see: Harrison, Wood and Gaiger 2008

overlooked ancient Egyptian pieces.⁸ Denon's edited work, published from 1809 and continuing for twenty years was a massive collection of twenty-nine volumes. It contains meticulous descriptions, drawings, maps, to scale plans and geographic positions of hundreds of buildings and monuments. The scale of the project is acknowledged in Denon's introduction: he says this work 'represent(s) the widest variety of objects and throw(s) new light on the science of Antiquity' (2008:1139).⁹ The range of 'objects' studied in these volumes is condensed and displayed in the *Frontispiece*, a highly detailed engraving of the antiquities discovered during the expedition (Figure 14). It acts on several levels, first as imperial propaganda, demonstrating the power and control of Napoleon. Secondly it shows the continued fascination with using both classical and Egyptian styles and that by combining them a new style was created.

The *Frontispiece* was designed by Denon and encapsulates the variety of subjects depicted in the *Description*. It also shows Denon's importance to Napoleon, it was this expedition which brought him to the, then, General's notice. An astute operator, Baron Dominique Vivant Denon, as Gould says had 'ridden every political crisis' (1965:87) in recent French history; he was an ex-aristocrat, artist, writer, diplomat and traveller.¹⁰ He came to Napoleon's attention during the expedition to Egypt as a man dedicated to his work. Denon travelled widely with the army in Egypt and built up friendly relations with the troops. He published his own work, *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Égypte* in 1802 which was quickly circulated and later followed by the first volumes of the *Description*

⁸ Taken from West's work *Discourse to the Students of the Royal Academy* quoted in Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2008: 1116-1119

⁹ This work is quoted in Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2008. The quality of the *Description* is indeed impressive in its level of detail; Denon even suggests that the measurements are good enough to enable a reader to reconstruct buildings fully.

¹⁰ Denon did seem to mix in eclectic circles; he had been a favourite at the court of Louis XV, been friends with Voltaire and visited Pope Pius VII. For more see: Nowinski 1970

of which he edited and designed the *Frontispiece*.¹¹ His relationship with Napoleon was excellent and he designed the new symbol of the empire – a bee. Later Napoleon made him director of the Louvre, where he had a singular and modern view of what the museum should contain.

Terrence Russell describes the *Frontispiece* as ‘a perspective view of Egypt, characterised by the principal monuments with which this country is decorated’ (2001: vii). It does indeed show various monuments, buildings and artefacts which the French recorded and it attempts to relate them to their geographical locations. However, it is more than a simple indication of what is to be found in the subsequent volumes. This engraving shows the importance of this expedition in securing Napoleon’s reign as emperor.¹² It suggests that Napoleon collected, even ‘conquered’ these pieces and now as emperor hypothetically presents them. I have already discussed the spoils of the Italian campaign which were put triumphantly on display in the Louvre, and suggested, in the remits of the Gaze theory, they control the viewer. The *Frontispiece* acts in the same way, controlling the associations that a viewer can make between Napoleon and ancient history. On the upper frieze Napoleon is portrayed armed, nude and driving an Egyptian styled chariot thus filtering heroic antiquity through an Egyptian lens. In the act of throwing a spear or javelin he is the image of a supreme conquering hero. He is shown single-handedly fighting and conquering the Egyptian forces creating the impression he is a great warrior, and worthy emperor of newly heroic France.

Napoleon’s portrayal embraces the use of Classical imagery. He is at the head of a ‘Classicised’ procession, heaving with Greco-Roman imagery and, pursuing the eagle,

¹¹ Translation: *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*.

¹² Although he was crowned in 1804, several years after the invasion and retreat this *Frontispiece* from 1809 glorifies Napoleon’s actions at that time overtly.

the symbol of his imperial army and Rome's. He is preparing to crush his enemies as they cower, en masse, panicking by the personification of the Nile and the Pyramids. Napoleon's entourage, Classically styled, are personifications of science, history and the arts, suggesting French superiority in these fields overcoming the confused Egyptian rabble.¹³ The procession creates a generalised feel of Classical antiquity; and the mix-and-match style is mirrored in the representation of the Nile in the opposite corner. The reclining personification of the god as a Roman river deity accompanies the Classical features and was a common way to portray the river as seen on the Arc de Triomphe, (Figure 51) but in the *Frontispiece* it creates a strange juxtaposition with the ancient Egyptian elements.

The Nile, so important at the heart of Egypt, yet portrayed in this Classical guise needs to be carefully considered. It can be explained by the idea that Napoleon viewed himself in the guise of Caesar or Augustus 'reclaiming' Egypt on behalf of the imperial 'club' he was fashioning himself a member of, rather than restoring the country to the Egyptians or even conquering it for the French.¹⁴ This reading is enforced by the prow of the ship pushing into the frame and the flaming altar on the left. It reminds Classicists at least of Vergil's *Aeneid*: 'stood Caesar Augustus, On his ship's high stern, a double flame licking his temples' (*Aeneid* 8.776-8).¹⁵ This association positions Napoleon hermeneutically in the wake of Augustus, founding an empire from the miscellaneous remnants of civil war and political chaos. It puts Napoleon at the head of a chain of

¹³ A recent Parisian exhibition showcased the cultural importance of this expedition and the blossoming of a supportive relationship between the French and Egyptian forces: *Bonaparte et l'Égypte – feu et lumières*. Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 14 October 2008 – 19 March 2009

¹⁴ Motivation for the invasion was supposedly to free Egypt from the tyranny of the Mamelukes. The political rationale and story of the expedition are interesting yet complex. See: Strathern 2008; Herold 1963

¹⁵ Translation: Lombardo 2005

historical events that suggest his ‘imperial’ destiny is inevitable. The Nile, Egypt’s key resource has transformed to await him in a form that speaks to ‘Classicised’ Europe directly. The steady progression of the Classical references overcoming the Egyptian ones, in this upper panel unequivocally ask viewers to see Napoleon in the role of an ancient Roman conqueror.

This presentation also suggests an attempt by Denon to rewrite Napoleonic history. Strathern argues the expedition ‘resulted in failure, but Napoleon refused to see it as such’ (2008:421) – a view supported here as Denon’s depiction presents a glorious result but in a carefully contrived piece of propaganda which commemorates certain memories rather than reflects the reality of the expedition.¹⁶ Presenting such images in a medium that would be published and circulated widely years after the event it depicted, echoes Augustan branding in the *Aeneid*, and from contemporary reports we know Vergil’s poem was widely appreciated in Paris at this time.¹⁷ Vergil’s evocation of a ‘future’ Augustus, ‘born of gods, Who will establish again a Golden Age,’ (*Aeneid* 6: 940-941), shimmers behind similar rebranding in the *Frontispiece*. For example, the presentation of bee and star symbols in the lower corners resemble a hieroglyphic form of the names of ancient Egyptian Kings.¹⁸ Such presentation makes Napoleon part of a longer immortal, imperial tradition of ancient nations. It is made specifically Napoleonic by the presence of his monogram on the lower panel, encircled with a snake. The Egyptian people surrounding the monogram seem to be paying homage to Napoleon, reinforcing the impression he is their rightful leader. Here we see Egyptianising motifs

¹⁶ The *Description* was published not only in France but throughout Europe.

¹⁷ An article in the *Evening Mail* reports that a new translation of Book 4 of the *Aeneid* was well received in Paris. (*Evening Mail* 24 June 1799)

¹⁸ A bee and a star were Napoleonic emblems that covered his personal possessions and public propaganda.

and images that are both supportive and compliant when it comes to rewriting and exaggerating historical facts.

The side panels show Napoleon's victories during the Egyptian campaign, creating the effect that the monuments and artefacts displayed in the central panel are contained and secondary to his personal deeds as military leader. The imperial symbols are predominant, for example imperial eagles crown the standards which bear the names of the Egyptian victories. Similarly styled birds can be seen on the Arc de Triomphe, crowning or ending lists of fallen generals (Figure 15). The laurel wreaths remind us generically of Roman imperial victories. A common motif for the depiction of a militarily triumphant emperor, the inclusion of laurel leaves here suggests that it is as important to study the Classically inspired decoration as well as the Egyptian style when reading this piece.¹⁹ Detailing victories in this way also shows an attempt to portray Napoleon as an emperor keen to employ the imagery of his ancient predecessors and to remodel it to suit contemporary events and his own burgeoning ideology. This creates a connexion with the past that echoes the idea of change through recuperation of ancient values that was at the heart of the Augustan political settlement's branding; which at least hints at an organisational connexion and shared political dynamic between Augustus' Rome and Napoleonic France.

The central panel shows a varied collection of monuments and artefacts that demonstrate how deeply the French expedition scoured Egypt. The most obvious pieces are the so-called 'Pompey's' pillar and Cleopatra's needle, that sit rather uneasily at either side of the frame. These two monuments once more indicate the mixture of

¹⁹ The portrayal of an emperor on the obverse of a coin often included a laurel leaf crown. For more information and a discussion of Augustus' coinage see: Wallace-Hadrill 1986

Egyptian and Classical artistic styles this *Frontispiece* demonstrates. The pillar was erected by Diocletian in AD 200 as part of restorations to a temple complex at Alexandria, and its inclusion here represents that city.²⁰ Landing at Alexandria had been a disappointment, as de Bourrienne recounts: ‘We found only two ancient monuments standing...Pompey’s Pillar and Cleopatra’s Needle; but there is scarcely a trace of the times of the Caesars, and none of Alexander’s tomb.’ (1831:144). The importance of both these monuments is clear, for although they seem to be second best to the connections that could have been forged with Alexander or directly with Caesar, de Bourrienne later acknowledges the significance of the column for Napoleon: ²¹

What should he have cared for the column which we beheld on our arrival in Alexandria, had it not been Pompey’s pillar? It is for artists to admire or censure its proportions and ornaments, for men of learning to explain its inscriptions; but the name of Pompey renders it an object of interest to all.

This quote neatly sums up the cultural significance of the expedition and roles of the savants while highlighting Napoleon’s interest in specific antiquity. This pillar had nothing to do with Pompey but the assumed association renders it instantly noteworthy to someone as adept as Napoleon at reusing antiquity for associated glory. After the battle for Alexandria he wanted the names of the fallen inscribed on the shaft, to honour the dead soldiers and encourage the living, but the work was never completed. Its position in the frame suggests however that Denon was not entirely happy with an interpretation that rested on assumed history. We know the savants took details of the column and Denon discusses it in his early work *Voyages*: ‘A monument had been erected in Alexandria to

²⁰ ‘Pompey’s pillar’ seems to be a colloquial name, during the period under discussion it was attributed to Severus, for examples see: Partington 1835. Denon (1986) discusses its legacy; Baines and Malek (2000) now suggest it was erected by Diocletian.

²¹ Bourrienne, de 1836:335

Pompey; this monument was lost' (1986:23).²² This shows Denon is unaffected by sentimental history and is not driven by the same thirst for glory that makes Napoleon want to define the column by presumed associations of questionable accuracy. This discrepancy between the two men offers one reason why this column is half hidden in the *Frontispiece*. Its position suggests Denon is almost forbidding the column to be noted and misinterpreted within the mix of Napoleonic imagery. Evidently Napoleon's ruthless deployment of associated historical glory was compromised by Denon's pursuit for historical integrity.

Clearly distinguishable within the mix of sculptures and statues, in the central panel is the Rosetta stone, a planisphere and the Giza sphinx. The arrangement suggests a careful attempt to display them as French trophies, whether the French still possessed the items or not.²³ The Nile winds through the scene built up with monuments on either side, its path perhaps representing the long journey the French endured and the ancient history they discovered. However, the collection of antiquities at the end of this path suggests it is the modern, French-made *Description* which now lays claim to these pieces. Displaying Napoleon's Classicised image in the top panel makes it appear he controls them, as his is the overriding Gaze. By cataloguing them thus the French claim the Egyptian discoveries and control them through the presence of Napoleonic emblems in the surrounding panels.

The form of the *Frontispiece* evokes propylons or the pediments of Egyptian temples. Excellent examples of these can be found in the *Description*: for example, Vol.

²² Ashton (1884) suggests they scaled the monument. I have used a 1986 reprinted translation of Denon's work here. Denon later goes on to prove how the column can neither be dedicated to Septimus Severus.

²³ The British forces seized the Rosetta stone along with many other antiquities following the Treaty of Alexandria in 1801.

III Plate 51 shows the South propylon at Karnak (Figure 16). The pediment is almost identical to that of the *Frontispiece*, complete with winged uraei. This was a popularly used emblem during the Egyptomania craze and will be discussed in more detail below. Its deployment here shows that the *Frontispiece* for all its Classical references is primarily an Egyptianising portrait of the emperor and his conquests. This is emphasised by the use of a propylon as the structural backdrop for the *Frontispiece* that all the imagery is then pinned to. Although it is an example of diverse ideologically charged propaganda, its practical purpose was as a *Frontispiece* to the largest documentation of Egyptian art and architecture of its time. Elements such as the propylon make it a practical success by hinting at the contents of the subsequent volumes. It also frames the reader's experience as one of France gazing into French-described Egypt's past glories modulated by French scientific history. The form thus suggests France has internalised Egypt in epistemological terms and mastered it taxonomically.

The *Frontispiece* thus presents the invasion as an epistemological victory. The cultural significance of the discoveries made in Egypt is alluded to in the carefully arranged artefacts of the central panel. The engraved obelisk represents the historical significance of conquest in Egypt, also hinting at Roman imagery, a theme which I will be discussing in more detail below. The Sphinx from Giza, still half hidden in sand suggests the mystery and allure of Egypt as a recognisable emblem from Greek mythology.²⁴ The planisphere shows the ancients' understanding of the cosmos. The most pertinent artefact is the Rosetta stone, a discovery that perpetuated real

²⁴ It is depicted here as it would have been discovered, half buried in sand giving a post-modern thrill to a modern viewer.

understanding of Egypt by unlocking language.²⁵ These pieces represented the breadth of discoveries in Egypt and the cultural importance of what was presented in the *Description*. It is easy to understand how a publication that for the first time gave a real opportunity to study such diverse aspects of ancient and modern Egyptian culture, enflamed the fascination with this civilisation and its artistic and architectural production during the Napoleonic period.

Although the French had retreated from Egypt by the time the *Description* was published, the *Frontispiece* shows an attempt at rebranding and glorifying the period spent in Egypt. Denon created, in effect, a new visual ‘cultural memory’ to satisfy French or at least Napoleonic need to present this expedition positively. Although the military invasion was ultimately a disaster, the campaign to Egypt, as demonstrated by the *Frontispiece*, was an imperial propaganda and cultural triumph. The *Description* allowed cultural and artistic interest in Egypt to flourish across Europe. It helped move the craze of ‘Egyptomania’ into a stylistic statement and led to a European wide revision of artistic traditions.

Case Study II: The Fontaine du Fellah

I shall now move on to discuss the physical effect Egyptomania had on the topography of Paris during this period. This is an important part of this topic as it will show how the ‘Egypt’ detailed in the *Description* was re-imagined and used in Paris. I shall begin with a discussion of the Fontaine du Fellah (Figure 17), before moving on to

²⁵ Although the British claimed the stone from the French they could not crack the code to decipher them. The French scholar and archaeologist Jean François Champollion was the first person to successfully translate them in 1822.

the Fontaine de la Victoire (Figure 18) both of which evoke the Nile campaign. The obelisk in Place de la Concorde (Figure 19) will then be discussed in relation to its supposed symbolism and what it meant to the French people. These three monuments will help us reach further conclusions regarding the use of Egyptian style in the architectural and artistic production of Napoleon's reign.²⁶

Curl neatly sums up that after the publication of the *Description* 'the Egyptianisation of French taste proceeded apace' (1994:132). Within public architecture the creative legacy of the *Description* became immortalised in Paris in very concrete ways. The ultimate failure of the military campaign and the loss of control in Egypt were superseded by the influx of interest in the now accessible style of Egyptian art and architecture.²⁷ To this extent then Strathern's conclusion concerning Napoleon's declaration that he had run a successful campaign was a 'delusion (that) would be shared by his fellow countrymen' (2008:421).²⁸ The truth of this statement is reflected in the erection of several monuments around Paris which glorify the Egyptian campaign.

The small Fontaine de Fellah is situated on the Rue de Sèvres in the south east part of the city.²⁹ It was dedicated to the Nile campaign and General Desaix, a favourite of Napoleon's who fell at the battle of Marengo. Napoleon's reaction as Abbott tells us to the news of his death was 'Why am I not permitted to weep? Victory at such a price is dear!' (2005:156).³⁰ The Fellah fountain seems a slightly uneasy tribute to Desaix however: the water-bearing figure is a copy of the Antinous from the Hadrian's villa

²⁶ Map I shows the location of all these monuments.

²⁷ In addition to public monuments the Egyptianising style found expression in the private sphere, including Napoleon's palaces for example the Egyptianising Sèvres porcelain service and a variety of statues and clocks many of which can still be seen at Chateau Malmaison, Paris. For more examples and discussion of this style: Curl 1994

²⁸ For more analysis on the outcomes of the Egyptian expedition: Herold 1963

²⁹ From here the Fontaine de Fellah will be referred to as the Fellah. For its location see Map I

³⁰ This 2005 edition is a reprint of Abbott's 1883 work.

(Figures 20 & 21).³¹ Antinous was Hadrian's teenage favourite and quite possibly his lover, who drowned in the Nile. The emperor, absorbed with grief deified him and encouraged worship of his cult throughout the empire.³² The straightforwardly Egyptian connotations of such a statue are therefore clear and the associations of grief and death give the portrayal a Sublime quality. However, the Hadrianic echo introduces an uncertain and subversive note into the honour for Desaix. The choice of statue represents a mixture of styles. The position of the figure and its clothing are typically Egyptian, the stance – left foot slightly forward – is a distinctive feature of Egyptian art.³³ The nemes head dress is more commonly associated with pharaohs and their depiction as sphinxes for example the sphinx at Giza as seen in the *Frontispiece* (Figure 14). However, the features and body of the Antinous figure are far more Classical.³⁴ The clash of styles in one statue creates a disjointed mix that unsettles a viewer. The merger of styles the *Frontispiece* achieved so effortlessly seems obvious and clumsy here. The juxtaposition of imagery and ideology raises questions as to the intentions of the fountain and Napoleon's association to it.

The entire monument seems ill at ease; stuck, half appearing, half hidden in the middle of a long grey wall. It is in a forgotten location, which almost seems a discourtesy to the huge Sublime propylon and battered walls. The propylon bears a startling resemblance to that of the *Frontispiece*, the only difference being the great Napoleonic eagle on the pediment guarding the fountain (Figure 22). This is the only Napoleonic

³¹ The original statue had been brought to the Louvre from Rome in 1798 it was sent back during the Restoration. It is currently situated in the Vatican Museum.

³² The city of Antinoopolis was also founded on the spot where Antinous drowned.

³³ A similar figure is the Colossus of Ramesses II found at the temple of Ptah at Mit Rahina. It is now in a garden near the museum there. For more analysis of Egyptian art: Baines and Malek 2000

³⁴ For analysis of this statue: Curl 1994:32

emblem and it replaces the traditional winged disc and uraei a viewer might have expected to find in that position. There is no inscription, although the bare piece of stone beneath the propylon suggests one was intended. The simple Napoleonic emblem therefore looks incomplete, and unaccompanied it does not blend in with the copious Egyptian backdrop. Overall the heavy-handed Sublime Egyptian components and solitary Napoleonic image creates an uneasy and unconfident tribute to Desaix. Its failure, when compared to the assimilation seen in the *Frontispiece*, is perhaps because it is not a modern re-imagining of an Egyptian piece, but displays a copy of an ancient statue – itself is a mixture of styles: the replica simply does not correspond with the re-imagined propylon and imperial eagle. Instead of the credence and support garnered by using ‘new’ French manipulated Egyptianising motifs, this monument seems an overdone and uneasy mixture of styles and connotations, of which no one seems particularly proud.

Case Study III : The Fontaine de la Victoire

The Fontaine de la Victoire (Figure 18) in the Place du Châtelet is in a more prominent location within the city, close to the Seine in a leafy square.³⁵ It was erected in 1807 by order of Napoleon as one of a series of fountains designed to embellish Paris. Another was planned on the site of the Bastille complete with basins and an elephant. Napoleon said of this:³⁶

The architects must not be content with their own researches; they must conform to the views of learned men and antiquarians, so that the elephant and the galley may give exact reproductions of the way in which they were used by the ancients.

³⁵ The Fontaine de la Victoire will be referred to as the Victoire fountain from this point.

³⁶ Thompson (1998) Letter 171

This suggests an aspiration for at least a veneer of historical integrity and accuracy, a trait we did not see in the *Frontispiece*. Compared to the Fellaḥ, the Victoire shows an eclectic mix of motifs that work succinctly and effectively as a memorial to the Egyptian campaign. For example, the capital of the column is decorated with palm leaves. This was another commonly used Egyptian motif and often seen in the *Description* – for example, a drawing of the hypostyle at Philae. (Volume I, Plate 18) (Figure 23). The palm leaves symbolise victory, appropriately as fifteen of Napoleon’s victories are inscribed on the shaft and highlight success in both the Egyptian and Italian campaigns. Commemoration of both expeditions suggests a reason for the mixture of styles evident on the monument. Both Classical and Egyptian decorative features are employed and the combination creates aesthetically and ideologically neat propaganda for Napoleon, very different to the Egyptian heavy style of the Fellaḥ.

The wider representation of Classical features creates a more decorative monument and provides a clear reading of victory and success. Classically dressed figures take key framing positions; four female figures embrace the bottom (Figure 24), and a winged victory at the top seems to crown the invisible armies commemorated on the column with laurel crowns (Figure 25). It is an image reminiscent of an 1808 sketch by David for the *Distribution of the Eagles* (Figure 26), in which a winged victory hovers over the loyal officers scattering laurel crowns: clearly this was a popular and easily understood motif of the time. An 1827 guide book names the figures around the base as personifications of Justice, Strength, Prudence and Vigilance (1827:122).³⁷ Holding hands with their backs to the column they do seem to be vigilant and protective, guarding the memoirs dedicated here. Their presence lends the monument gravity, their proximity

³⁷ This guide book is anonymous but was published in London and Paris.

to the column and their encircling position seems to shield the monument and suggests a strong and unbreakable determination to respect the memoirs consecrated here. A similar styled depiction showing figures holding hands with their backs to a column or monument can be seen in the *Description* (Volume III, Plate 31) (Figure 27). This similarity lends a sense of Egyptianising air that is re-imagined by the Classically styled figures and so does not overpower the monument. The imperial eagle on the base (Figure 28), reminds us immediately of Napoleon. Through this simple imagery he becomes a constant presence. The eagle suggests menacing but glorious imperial victory that war has delivered which is tempered by the quiet dignity, and human presence of the watchful figures at their silent vigil. Displaying the human cost and imperial success of war simultaneously evokes a ‘Sublime’ emotional response from a viewer, while showing a particular message of strength, making this watchable and comprehensible propaganda.³⁸

The final Classical emblem I shall focus on here is the cornucopia, a set of which act as channels for the water ducts (Figure 28). These horns of plenty have Classical associations as emblems of fertility and abundance. During the reconaissance of the Vatican by French officials a statue, the *Genius of Augustus* showing a hooded Augustus cradling a cornucopia, was seen and noted (Figure 29).³⁹ Although it was not looted it suggests to a viewer that an emperor should be associated with these emblems of fertility and abundance.⁴⁰ These horns of plenty also remind us of the Classical personification of the god of the Nile in the *Frontispiece* (Figure 14). A statue of this river deity, *The Colossus of the Nile* complete with overflowing cornucopia, was looted from Rome in

³⁸ The sphinxes around the base of the shaft were added much later in the 1850's.

³⁹ For more see: Beard and Henderson 2001:215; Haskell and Penny 1981:71

⁴⁰ Historians now believe this figure to be an imperial prince rather than Augustus for further analysis: Beard and Henderson 2001:215

1798 (Figures 30 & 31).⁴¹ Its quality and reputation was celebrated by the French who displayed it in the same Salon as the *Apollo Belvedere*.⁴² The cornucopia therefore had distinct Classical and Egyptian overtones, representing both the bountiful emperor and connecting him to the powerful and divine forces of nature.

Case Study IV: The Luxor Obelisk

The erection of an obelisk at the Place de la Concorde was not undertaken during Napoleon's reign, but the idea of removing such a monument from Egypt and placing it in Paris was dreamt of during his Egyptian expedition.⁴³ It is an act worthy of discussion as the motivations behind it were intended to have profound ideological influences which will neatly conclude this chapter's dialogue on the appeal of Egyptomania.

The historical appeal of erecting an obelisk is obvious: not only does it have specific Egyptian connotations but also generates links with ancient Rome.⁴⁴ From the time of the emperors, Rome has been littered with these monuments, reminders of the struggle for Mediterranean supremacy and Rome's determination to control Egypt – under Augustus as an imperial province. In 10 BC Augustus erected two obelisks from Heliopolis. One was placed in the Circus Maximus, the other in the Campus Martius as the gnomon for his Horologium. Nearly 1800 years later, in 1792, Pius VI re-erected the

⁴¹ The Nile statue was returned after Waterloo although the French tried, unsuccessfully, to exchange it and offered Canova's Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker. For further discussion: Haskell and Penny 1981: 272-3

⁴² Various sources discuss its removal to Paris including *The European Magazine* 1815:108
A replica of this statue had been created by Bourdot and placed in the Jardin de Tuileries by Louis XIII during his renovations of the Tuileries palace. The original was returned to Rome and currently resides in the Vatican Museums.

⁴³ Napoleon did not return to France with an obelisk at the end of the Egyptian campaign. In 1800 a paper was given by Coutelle to the Institute in Cairo on how such an engineering feat could be achieved but it was too late by that time for the French, who departed Egypt shortly afterwards.

⁴⁴ For further detailed discussion: Curran, Grafton, Long and Weiss 2009

‘Horoglorium’ obelisk outside the Curia Apostolica.⁴⁵ Obelisks had strong links with the ancient past, especially with Roman emperors, and the connotations of wielding such a monument are profound.

The guiding principle of erecting the obelisk in 1835 was not to honour Napoleon, or any other regime, its placement was to commemorate the French people. No political party or individual was to be glorified: rather the endurance and intelligence of the state.⁴⁶ The swift and brutal changes to French society during the last forty years had been witnessed in the Place de la Concorde.⁴⁷ Each political leadership had laid claim to this area as Curran neatly sums up: ‘no spot in Paris had a greater ability to serve as a symbolic lightning rod’ (2009:251); making this the perfect location to honour the mettle of the French people and their endurance during such a tumultuous period of history. King Louis-Philippe I (1773-1850) wanted a monument that would politically ‘symbolise, effectively, nothing’ (Curran 2009:251); an ancient obelisk with no links to recent French history was an obvious choice (Figure 19).⁴⁸ Its Sublime characteristics and natural state as a religious object inspired the gravity and awe appropriate for honouring the endurance of the French people. Although hieroglyphics had been deciphered in 1822, their translation was only accessible to the privileged few. To the

⁴⁵ This is now the Palazzo Montecitorio.

⁴⁶ The technicalities of moving the obelisk are illustrated in gold on its base. Under the monarchy the French had never achieved such a technical or military glory, now finally they were free to do so. The movement of an obelisk therefore had patriotic associations glorifying the intelligence of the French engineers while highlighting the lethargy of the previous regime. For further analysis: Curran, Grafton, Long and Weiss 2009: 254

⁴⁷ An equestrian statue of Louis XV had stood in the square, this was torn down in 1792 and a depiction of Liberty raised. During the Terror the guillotine that dismissed the King and Queen occupied the crowds in this square. Under Napoleon plans were made for a series of triumphal arches and columns, one of which was to stand here. In 1816 the restored monarchy renamed the *Place* for the ‘martyred’ king.

⁴⁸ The obelisk is one of a pair; its brother still stands in Luxor.

general populace the mysterious inscriptions would give added gravitas to the overall effect of the monument.

Curran argues that the obelisk's presence had only vague associations with Napoleon and the Egyptian expedition, but was effectively an ideologically blank canvas. I suggest however that its topography links it irrevocably with Napoleon and his imperial legacy. Standing beneath the west face of the obelisk one can look directly up the Champs Elysees towards the Arc de Triomphe (Figure 31).⁴⁹ This arch was the most solid of all Napoleon's imperial propaganda in terms of visual impact on the city and will be discussed in Chapter III. Its sheer size makes it easily visible from the Place de la Concorde. The Luxor obelisk seems weak in the presence of such a huge symbol of the first imperial period of French history, and the dynamics of urban topography make Napoleon's legacy too large to be ignored. The obelisk, hinting at triumph over Egypt draws the eyes and encourages the viewer to gaze along the axis dominated by the Arc, which inevitably concentrates gaze. The connecting street, the 'Elysian fields', where the good and heroic reap their rewards, shows once again the merger of Classical and Egyptian themes and images to create powerful symbolism that links Napoleon with the continued evolution of Egyptomania even after his demise.

This chapter began with a discussion of cultural memory: the erection of an obelisk I believe shows the French trying to explain and understand their contemporary situation through a single mysterious emblem of an ancient society. Utilising Egyptian emblems was a method of helping them to determine their own self image, suggesting that the effect of Egyptomania was profound and enduring for France, as witnessed by its re-emergence during this period. Not only did ancient Egyptian culture encourage artistic

⁴⁹ See Map I for the relative locations of the Place de la Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe.

output but it had profound consequences for ideological development: the obelisk and its limited associations helped the new state comprehend its past and look to the future.

This chapter has shown how the expedition to Egypt was presented in Paris, through artwork and architecture. My discussion has made clear how the symbols and artistic allure of ancient Egypt were used in architectural features such as the Parisian fountains and Luxor Obelisk as a method of explaining and commemorating the recent French past during Napoleon's regime and later as means of building a new cultural identity for the nation. Discussion of the *Frontispiece* also demonstrated the effectiveness of re-imagining Egyptian imagery as Napoleonic propaganda. However, I have demonstrated a Classical touch was always needed, where Napoleon was concerned, to really ignite the potency of Egyptian imagery in creating supportive visual and ideological propaganda for the imperial regime. I have shown that combining carefully selected ideas and images from Egyptian and Roman civilisations was crucial when creating successful Napoleonic imagery and ideology. Without this carefully crafted combination the results are leaden and awkward associations and dismissed monuments. The increasing interest in Egypt across Europe was fuelled by the 1798 French expedition and this in turn had enduring results for the structures in the city. The legacy left by this expedition and its presentation in Paris connected Napoleon indefinitely with any later attempts that utilised Egyptianising architectural features and motifs for national self-expression in Paris.

CHAPTER III

DECORATING THE EMPIRE: PARIS AND ROME

'If I were master of France, I would want to make Paris not only the most beautiful city in existence... but also the most beautiful city that could exist'

Napoleon Bonaparte in 1797¹

This chapter will develop the arguments and readings proposed in Chapters I and II in order to assess the impact of the invasion of Italy and Egypt on the creation of Paris, architecturally, as an imperial capital. To fully achieve this I have selected a final set of key sites in Paris and Rome which exemplifies the relationship between the ancient Roman and modern French empires in the development of Napoleon's imperial urban production. In Paris my key monumental features are the Arc de Triomphe, Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and Place Vendôme.² I shall then turn to Rome and discuss the restorations and excavations carried out by the French during this period. This discussion develops my analysis of the French involvement in Italy and will show how the French responded to the remains of an ancient imperial capital while building their modern one. This in turn allows us to reflect on the true impact of coming face-to-face with the remnants of a comparable imperial power on French consciousness and the Napoleonic Empire.

I have once again chosen sources from British newspapers to help widen this discussion and incorporate a sense of how French experiments of reviving a Roman-glossed imperial style were perceived on the wider European stage. The British were engaged in a long standing conflict with the Napoleonic regime. The opinion of the

¹ Bidou 1939:236

² See Map I for the locations of all these monuments.

British press, therefore gives an important alternative view on this period of history. It is especially vital when we consider Napoleon's imposition of censorship throughout the French press. The British publications used French publications but with their knowledge of the administration of the Napoleonic regime they could properly assess what was presented and produce their own factual based opinions on French activities. *The Morning Chronicle*, which I introduced in Chapter I, presents a particularly interesting perspective in terms of 'freedom of the press'. As a radical newspaper, it criticised the British government and although not openly criticising the Napoleonic wars it offered a more liberal – or less orthodox – view on Napoleon's regime.

Case Study I: The Arc de Triomphe

The Arc de Triomphe, the largest triumphal arch in the world, is significant to this discussion for several reasons.³ The Arc's close classical connections make it an obvious example to show how Classical antiquity was restyled in Paris (Figure 33). The decoration on the Arc clearly demonstrates how certain key Classical motifs were utilised for powerful effect to support the Napoleonic regime. Planned to celebrate the French victory at Austerlitz, the Arc was one of four arches intended to decorate Paris. Writing about them in a note from St Cloud, Napoleon sketches out ideas: 'One of the first two must be a Marengo arch, and the other an arch of Austerlitz....the arch of Peace, and a fourth to be the arch of Religion'.⁴ Only the Arc was built and it celebrated the victorious

³ For ease it will now be referred to simply as the Arc.

⁴ Thompson 1998: Letter 116. The arches were part of a large scale building plan for Paris that included columns, fountains and obelisks.

Napoleonic army at Austerlitz.⁵ Albert Boime observes ‘its massive proportions (were) aimed at intimidating the population with Bonaparte’s awesome power’ (1990:13). Boime’s comment suggests that the arch was clearly intended to reinforce Napoleon’s power to the people of Paris. By renovating the topography of the city, marking the urban landscape with such a massive structure and opening up space through carefully designed vistas, Napoleon’s authority and achievements become a concrete and integral part of the identity of city. As the largest monument on the ideologically significant Champs-Élysées axis this arch not only advertises connections with antiquity but potently demonstrates Napoleon’s ego. It perhaps reminds us of the evocative schematisation of power represented by Augustus’ transformation of Rome during his reign. He similarly manipulated urban landscapes and vistas with building works. Examples included his mausoleum and Horologium. Such similarities between Napoleon’s modern building schemes and ancient ideological urban planning that were at the time exemplified by Rome, will become more apparent throughout this chapter.

The ideological importance of the arch is in part due to its visual similarities with its Roman forebears. Several plans were drawn up for the arch during 1806 (Figure 34). The final selection had overt associations with available Roman remains, remains that Napoleon’s Italian success had brought under French control. Clear similarities can be seen particularly with the Arch of Titus at the eastern end of the Forum: both are white marble with a single opening (Figure 35).⁶ The imperial connotations of this arch would have appealed to Napoleon’s quite vague but frequently expressed sense of a quintessentially imperial Roman image of an empire. His ‘plan’ was seemingly to mix

⁵ The completion of the Arc which had stopped in 1815 continued in 1823 under Louis XVIII and surprisingly adhered to the original design, it was inaugurated in 1836.

⁶ The location of the Arch of Titus has been marked on Map II

images and monuments to create the most evocative and symbolically potent set of imperial decorations: using and repackaging the most resonant emblems from primarily Roman ruins and also more generically imperial ones.⁷ Titus's Arch offers an appealing set of solid imperial connotations. Firstly the decorative images of triumphal glory and the interior eagle relief, complete with deified emperor, creates a strong impression of imperial success (Figure 36). Secondly Titus characterises a 'good' emperor when compared to his infamous brother Domitian. He is representative of successful military glory, supported by his father Vespasian's aura of stability. The Flavians rescued Rome from the chaos that engulfed the city and empire after the overthrow of the 'decadent' and corrupt Nero and one might argue Napoleon was attempting to achieve similar stability for France.⁸ Any connotations Napoleon was trying to evoke in using this arch as a model for his own would therefore be positive.

The next most pertinent similarity lies with the location of both arches.⁹ The Arch of Titus crowns the high point of the Sacra Via in Rome, a site which I suggest finds a counterpoint in the Champs-Élysées. This sacred way was the central phase for the route of Roman triumphs.¹⁰ The connexions forged between the two arches in this respect are important. Roman triumphs were focused visually on the personal glory of the commander, who by celebrating in this way would imprint his authority and magnificence on the fabric of urban life and city streets. This form of state-sanctioned celebration thus built the victorious general into the fabric of the state and its success.

⁷ For more discussion of this idea: Steiner 1981:701

⁸ For discussion of Napoleon's political life see: Englund 2004

⁹ Map I shows a contemporary plan of Paris and Map II shows a similar plan of Rome.

¹⁰ On the possible routes and triumphs in general: Beard 2007; Çelik & Favro & Ingersoll 1994: 151-164

The Arc, like the Arch of Titus, celebrates military triumph, and commemorates it permanently as a controlling and semiotically complex element of a streetscape.

Like its model in Rome the Arc became an important location during triumphal processions. However, Napoleon re-invented the values of a Roman triumphal arch, moving away from a celebrating purely military victories and encompassing dynastic themes. When he married Marie-Louise in 1810 the couple processed underneath the temporary structure of the Arc – representing itself artificially in finished form in this way it had the qualities of a simulacrum – and down the Champs-Élysées greeting their supporters before reaching the Louvre.¹¹ The Arc played an important part in this procession as the British press reported: ‘Their Majesties stopped about ten minutes under the triumphal arch at L’Etoile, where they were complimented by the magistrates of Paris’ (*The Morning Chronicle* 11 April 1810).¹² Utilising the Roman style arch as a particular stopping point suggests clear attempts to evoke and reinvent a Roman triumphal procession. This enforces Napoleon’s position as emperor and illuminates this space with solid imperial connotations, as he delves into a far more ancient past to support his reign at a dynastically crucial time.¹³ Marie-Louise was married to Napoleon with the express purpose of conceiving an heir: by celebrating the preliminary event here, the Arc comes to represent the sense of historical continuity that the empire draws succour from and the legacy it hopes to leave.

¹¹ The formal marriage ceremony took place in the Louvre; *The Caledonian Mercury* 14 April 1810 tells us tickets for admission were sold. Although the arch was not finished painted canvases were hung around the structure to give the impression of its completed state.

¹² The British newspapers seemed to receive news of the marriage about a week after it took place.

¹³ In 1840 Napoleon’s ashes were returned from St Helena and carried in a procession underneath the Arc. More recently in 1921, the body of an unknown soldier from the Great War was carried beneath the Arc and interred there. For more see: Fernades, D. & Plum, G. & Rouge-Ducos, I. 2000

The site of the Arc, the Place de l'Etoile had been an important space connected with the head of state for many years. As the summit of the Chaillot Hill, this space was the final visible location on the Champs-Élysées axis when viewed from the Louvre. This axis led from that palace and the Tuileries gardens circumvented the Place de la Concorde before leading up to the Place de l'Etoile.¹⁴ The summit was therefore a constantly visible empty 'space' and ripe for ambitious monarchical development. Numerous monarchs had sought to glorify themselves on this spot with ever flamboyant building plans.¹⁵ The most extravagant of these was Ribart de Chamoussier's 1758 design for a colossal elephant statue for Louis XV (Figure 37).¹⁶ The Place de l'Etoile was a tantalising area for the head of state to demonstrate his power; yet all previous plans for developing this site had failed monumentally, making Napoleon's achievement here even more impressive. Directly opposite the 'peoples' Place de la Concorde, and sharing the same axis, these two spaces represented the opposite ends of society.¹⁷ However the spatial reinvention by Napoleon, using an injection of ancient imperial monuments created a common factor and a turning point for the whole area. Suddenly under Napoleon's plans the separate 'areas', the monarchical Louvre and Tuileries garden, the Revolutionary Place de la Concorde, and the symbolic Place de l'Etoile were united and given a common purpose and a collective imperial identity.

If we now turn to the reliefs on the Arc we find significant and iconographic dialogue between Classical antiquity and Napoleon's Paris. There are four main reliefs,

¹⁴ This area is indicated on Map I.

¹⁵ In 1723 plans were made for a 60 foot tall pyramid on the Place de l'Etoile. In 1787 Ledoux designed and built a pair of tollgates near the site to form an entrance onto the Champs-Élysées

¹⁶ The interior of the elephant would have housed a concert hall, ballrooms and suites to accommodate visiting officials. Surmounting the elephant would have been a statue of Louis XV.

¹⁷ Napoleon did have plans for a national column or monument in the Place de la Concorde see: Pugin 1829:9; Masson 1911:93.

and various friezes and smaller depictions, of which I shall only highlight the parts most pertinent to this study. The *Triumph of Napoleon* is the most significant (Figure 38).¹⁸ Classically dressed personifications surround the Emperor who in turn wears a classically inspired toga and is crowned by laurels, suggestive of a Roman triumph.¹⁹ This method of depiction reminds us of other representations of the Emperor – for example, paintings such as Ingres’ *Napoleon I on the Imperial Throne* (1806), – and once more of an 1808 sketch for David’s *Distribution of the Eagles*, (Figures 39 and 26). In Ingres’ work Napoleon wears a laurel crown and is surrounded by the emblems of power. In David’s sketch a Napoleon crowned with laurels and dressed in his imperial robes, salutes the awaiting soldiers. The laurel crown was a familiar accessory for Roman emperors, regularly seen on their depictions on coins.²⁰ On the Arch of Titus various figures in the procession wear these crowns (Figure 40); if compared with the personification of Victory on the Arc, who similarly wears laurels it makes Napoleon’s image seem suffused with an overriding sense of imperial glory, contextualised by assigning to him a place in a historical panorama, and generating a sense of dynastic progression.

The eagle-topped standards similarly evoke connections with a Classical past. These standard were used by Napoleon’s forces and present a potent symbol of power, seen for example in David’s propagandist painting the *Distribution of the Eagles* (1810) (Figure 41).²¹ Their potency undoubtedly comes from associations with Roman legionary standards and so ‘channels’ the power of the Roman army almost reimagining it as a

¹⁸ Designed by Jean-Pierre Cortot it is on the east side of the arch on the lower section of the south-east pillar, facing down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

¹⁹ Victory crowns Napoleon, while Town bows at his feet. History inscribes the event on a tablet and a winged symbol of fame flies above them all.

²⁰ The emperor was displayed on the obverse of the coin normally wearing a laurel crown for a discussion of Augustus’ coinage see: Wallace-Hadrill 1986

²¹ The troops depicted here are given their eagle standards by Napoleon and in return swear to defend him to the death.

weapon for use by Napoleonic forces.²² Comparing *The Triumph of Napoleon* with the other relief on this side of the Arc, the *Departure of the Volunteers* (Figure 42) we see an iconographic change in the standards that reflects the contemporary regime shift.²³ The cockerel-topped standards and helmets symbolising France in the *Volunteers*, have become eagle topped for Napoleon's coronation.²⁴ This is the most obvious indication that Classical imagery was used to create a new iconography for the new empire, marking a direct break with previous French regimes.

Napoleon is deliberately replacing the patriotic image of the cockerel popularised during the Revolution and associated with the Bourbons, with an image synonymous with his empire and a far deeper sense of ancient history. The eagle has simultaneously evolved from the Revolutionary cockerel while usurping the symbol of the Sun King. Such a move presents a new monumentally authorised iconographic evolution, appeasing the Revolutionaries by rebranding their adopted cockerel, but demonstrating menacing imperial power in the eagle's ferocity: this bird is stronger and faster and fiercer than the simple royal poultry. The shift is menacing in the fact Napoleon clearly controls the past, and how it is to be recorded, utilising ancient history to devour the symbols and memory of a monarchy, only recently disbanded. It imbues the image of a crowned Napoleon with an irreproachable sense of power. By displaying these two symbols next to one another on this side of the arch Napoleon challenges the past and presents a complex ideological

²² For reference to eagle standards: Tacitus's *Annals* Book I Chapters 60-62

²³ Designed by François Rude it is on the east side of the arch on the lower section of the north-east pillar, facing down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. It represents the conscription of 1792 when 200,000 men were gathered to fight for France against the enemies of the Revolution. From this point it will be referred to as the *Volunteers*.

²⁴ The cockerel was also associated with Louis XIV but more overtly with the Revolution. For more information see: Kruft, Calander, Taylor and Wood 2003; Hayward 2007:43

juxtaposition, which shows the changing identity of Paris through the utilisation of Classical imagery.

In terms of the Gaze these two friezes look down the vista that contains the Place de la Concorde, Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and directly confront the Louvre. Chapter II introduced Gaze theory as a way of understanding the creation of exhibits in the Louvre and we saw how the Carrousel Arch too, with its Quadriga, could participate in various points of view. If we now explore how the Gaze theory relates to the entire axis, connecting Louvre to Arc, we can see how Paris was being moulded into an imperial city. Margaret Olin discusses politically motivated artists ‘subverting the tradition of exhibits to force an awareness of ... the powerful gaze of a wealthy patron or multinational concern’ (Nelson and Shiff 2003:326). Applied to this area of Napoleonic Paris, the sheer size of the Arc and its decoration forces the viewer to contemplate the patron who funded it and the purposes behind it. The Arc frames and contains the vista in an ideologically significant manner, standing atop the Arc one can see down into the Place de la Concorde and further into the Tuileries to the Carrousel Arch which itself is surrounded by the imposing wings of the Louvre (Figure 43). The mass of potent ideological architecture imbues this entire axis with special significance, every location represents recent French history. The Place de la Concorde was the repository for the discharge of the Revolution; the Louvre and Tuileries gardens had been remodelled from monarchical park and palace to symbols of French nationality and military strength filled with ancient sculpture; the Carrousel arch and its equine crown visually represent the achievements of Napoleon’s

reign. All these areas complete with monuments are then lanced by Napoleon's triumphal way making the 'zone' charged with imperial ideological significance.²⁵

The viewer, remembering these separate locations but now promenading in the new unified zone, finds no relief from the complex shared and individual memories of the recent and ancient past and the dialogue between them. The whole area is invigorated with new remodelled associations of antiquity during this period. These are tempered by the monarchical memories evoked by the presence of Louvre: now container of conquered antiquity's artistic production but which in basic exterior has not changed. Standing within this area the viewer is being forced to internalise and respond to the identity shifts he is faced with. A viewer experiences the new regime as a palimpsestic document, which has variously varnished, overwritten and recuperated the familiar locations using the broad brush of 'antiquity' to create order. This may be seen as a failing on Napoleon's part but in fact I suggest that it is crucial for a viewer to see the old connotations and understand the change in regime, if they are to fully acknowledge the 'wealthy patron' who has brought it about.

Napoleon's position as the 'patron' flows from his image on the classically inspired Arc staring down the length of the vista, towards the Louvre. We have previously engaged with a reading of the Gaze that interprets it as a machination of power: that acts to 'advertise... authority by putting [the self] on display and thus awing the impotent masses into submission' (Cavallaro 2001:132). The Arc as both the largest monument in and boundary wall for this space, successfully glorifies the emperor and prioritises his overarching and controlling Gaze. Topographically the Arc controls and defines the north-west end of this precinct and is an oversize counterpoint, to the Louvre

²⁵ This 'zone' has been highlighted in yellow on Map I

at the opposite south-easterly end. It represents remodelled antiquity whereas the Louvre, presents to Paris, and the world, France's genuine but controlled antiquity – the collection itself. Napoleon's presence on the Arc helps to unite the sites on the axis: he is the constant viewer of them all. Under his Gaze the 'zone' is appreciated and controlled thus becoming a precinct of power indelibly connected with the emperor and his associated imperial imagery.²⁶

The final pair of friezes, I want to introduce here, *Peace* and *Resistance* overlook the Avenue de la Grande Armée and depict the necessity and preparations for war but also the results it can bring. Neither image is as overtly Napoleonic as the *Triumph of Napoleon* but they do share some Classical associations. *Peace* (Figure 44) shows Minerva, goddess of wisdom, flanked by laurel and oak branches representing archetypal Roman rewards for courage and bravery.²⁷ The goddess bestows the 'blessings of peace' (Sturgis 2008:187) which are visualised as sheaves of wheat and a man harnessing a bull ready for the plough suggesting peaceful prosperity and fertility.

The *Resistance* (Figure 45), I suggest, is more overtly Classical. We can find thematic similarities between this frieze and reliefs from the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus: fragments of which had been purchased by a relative of Napoleon in 1811 and are still in the Louvre.²⁸ One half of the altar frieze depicts a Roman census and preparations for a sacrifice to Mars at the end of the ceremony (Figure 46).²⁹ A procession of men is preparing to be conscripted, which is immediately reminiscent of the

²⁶ For more urban studies concerning space and cultural memory see: Ihl 1993; Hebbert 2005; Hutton 1993

²⁷ *Peace* represents the peace and tranquillity that came after 1815. It was sculpted by Antoine Etex.

²⁸ *Resistance* imagines the time in 1814 when the enemies of Napoleon marched against him and the whole nation was required to stand and resist them. A personification of Future dictates to the young man his duty to fight, a fitting theme for the arch dedicated to the glory of the army. It was also sculpted by Antoine Etex.

²⁹ The second half of this frieze is a Greek style mythical seascape. These fragments are currently in the Glyptothek Museum, Munich.

theme presented in the *Resistance*: men preparing for war. The conscription and deployment of troops also shares similarities with the Arc's upper frieze, which shows the *Departure and Return of the French Armies*.³⁰ On the Domitius Ahenobarbus altar, men lead animals to sacrifice at the altar presided over by Mars. On the Arc's *Departure* frieze (Figure 47), two winged figures record the names of the French troops as they process towards an altar of the Fatherland at the centre of the frieze before departing for war.³¹

The decoration on the altar of the Fatherland is an example of re-imagined Classical imagery (Figure 48). On one pillar is a fasces, a symbol of authority in ancient Rome, although it was also adopted by the French Republic and later for its imperial connotations by Napoleon.³² It symbolised the unity and power of imperial France. On the other pillar are flames similar to those on the altar in the *Frontispiece* (Figure 14). However the quasi-Roman elements are tempered by the rather puzzling French inscription '*LA LOI LE ROI PATRIE*'.³³ Clearly it honours France as a Fatherland but the reference to a King is more difficult to ratify. I suggest it may have been an attempt by King Louis-Philippe I to update the Arc and link himself to the glorious history it commemorates. The Arc was completed in 1836 during his reign and he dedicated it to the glory of generic French armies.³⁴ He celebrated the achievement by minting a decorative medal displaying himself and Napoleon in the guise of Roman emperors

³⁰ The *Departure of the French Armies* is on the side facing Champs-Élysées side and stretches halfway around the two lateral elevations. The *Return of the Armies* faces the Avenue de la Grande Armée and halfway around the two lateral elevations.

³¹ Josephine and her son can be seen sitting under a tree with David who sketches the procession.

³² The fasces was carried by lictors before the emperor in ancient Rome. It was used in France during various periods and later adopted by Mussolini as symbol and name for his Fascist party. For further discussion: Falasca-Zamponi 2000: 95-101

³³ Translation: the Law, the King, Country.

³⁴ Louis-Philippe as a young man had supported the Revolution. He was described as a bourgeois or citizen King: Viault 1990:241-243. For a fuller biography: Howarth 1961

complete with laurel crowns (Figure 49). Here he deliberately employs the Napoleonic style of re-imagined Classical imagery to symbolise his own glory and associate himself with what is obviously viewed as a glorious past. This type of display ultimately shows the enduring nature of the type of imagery Napoleon utilised and its potency as a symbol of power.

In the *Return* section obelisks, sphinxes (Figure 50), and a Classical personification of the god of the Nile (Figure 51) representing victory in Egypt are carried by the soldiers who wait attendance on a seated Classically styled personification of Victory holding laurel wreathes (Figure 52). The Italian expedition is represented by the depiction of two triumphal arches at the ends of main frieze (Figure 51). Here the Classical and Egyptian elements are harnessed to show the achievements of the French army abroad, drawing together in one key monument the iconographic potential and Napoleon's position as heir to Europe's past and civilisation's early beginnings. The French achievements are immortalised on the Arc but also re-modelled as part of an eternal continuity as the frieze encircles the monument, that gives concrete form to an imagined, ideal procession at the entrance to the processional route. It creates the notion of Paris as the heart of a new empire absorbing ancient civilisations and presenting them here for display.

Case Study II: The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel

I have already discussed the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel (Figure 12) as a platform for the looted Venetian horses, but it also feeds into my discussion of more

generically ‘Roman’ influences in this highly charged landscape.³⁵ It was built to celebrate the exploits of the Grand Armée at Austerlitz but is much smaller and more ornate than the Arc. Structural similarities link it to several Roman arches, and the symbolic possibilities of such connexions were not lost on visitors to the city. A letter from a visitor to Paris published in the *Morning Chronicle* states that the Arch of Septimius Severus, ‘supplied to Napoleon a model for his own’ (*Morning Chronicle* 5th November 1814). It is interesting to note that the Severan arch (Figure 53) is used as the comparison rather than the more structurally and decoratively similar Arch of Constantine (Figure 54). The Severan, at the heart of the Forum presents the obvious parallel for this visitor – suggesting that Napoleon’s new imperial zone has directly associative connotations with the Forum and the heart of the ancient empire. Constantine’s arch complicated by the bloody associations of its neighbour, the Colosseum, is a mixture of requisitioned marbles, so its ability to speak to Napoleonic Paris, and to the visitors of this zone in particular, is far less potent.

The Carrousel’s presence I suggest affirms that this entire space was remodelled to become a modern imperial zone, centred around a new ‘Sacred Way’. It was also however fashioned into a public space for those at leisure. An anonymous American visitor to Paris writes ‘We chose to walk down this avenue that we might contemplate it at our leisure’ (1814:76), suggesting that visitors at least perceived this space not as an enforced parade-ground but as a place where one could promenade and contemplate the changes freely. From this we see a hint of how Paris became a reinvigorated capital city with improved public areas for its citizens whilst also being reinvented as an imperial

³⁵ The arch is situated in front of the Louvre on the same axis as the Arc from this point on it will be referred to as Carrousel.

epicentre for the empire. This idea will become more important when we turn to the French developments in Rome. The Napoleonic building work that I have discussed and the increasing similarities with Roman architectural sites, share the same qualities as outlined by David Larmour and Diana Spencer:³⁶

By being named, a Roman site in particular stands metonymically for the processes of expansion, conquest, or decline that have – or are ‘seen’ to have – transformed it: the renovation and extension of the Republican Forum Romanum by Augustus and his successors is a prime example of this.

Napoleon’s conquests and imperial expansions have similarly allowed the area from the Louvre to the Arc to physically expand and transform, becoming a space not dissimilar to the ancient Forum Romanum. The identity of the zone was renovated, expunging the monarchical associations and creating ancient imperial connotations through monumental building work, thus forming the nucleus of Napoleon’s new, modern, imperial capital. This zone, based around the Champs-Élysées, came to represent the transformation, ideologically, socially and physically that Napoleon’s reign brought to all of France.

Case Study III: The Vendôme Column

The final Parisian monument I shall discuss is the Vendôme Column in the Place Vendôme (Figure 55). Overt comparisons with Trajan’s Column will lead into the concluding phase of this discussion, the renovations in Rome during Napoleon’s reign. Although not in the same axial space as the arches, the Vendôme Column is only slightly outside it, and in fact its contribution here is in part to create an additional axis, available from the main route, drawing the eye into and out of the primary Napoleonic zone I have

³⁶ Spencer and Larmour (eds) 2007:12

discussed. Its similarities with Trajan's Column also help to increase our understanding of the effect of the Italian expedition on empire-fashioning in Paris. The Column was planned as early as 1803 and completed in 1810; its continuous frieze commemorates the battle of Austerlitz in 1805.³⁷ Although invested with specific military history, the Column was erected in 1810 in conjunction with the celebration of the imperial wedding – creating another link with the developing Arc.³⁸ The Place Vendôme, like the Place de l'Etoile, was an ideologically important site once having housed an equestrian statue of Louis XIV, destroyed during the Revolution. To celebrate the imperial wedding in this area was then especially ideologically important. Steven Englund describes Napoleon's marriage as containing 'elements of ideological pacification – a "son of the Revolution" marries the grand-niece of Marie-Antoinette, making him [Napoleon] the "nephew" of Louis XVI' (2004:361). This suggests that by building a monument on this spot, which is decoratively encircled by events that confirm his position as emperor, Napoleon helps to reconfigure the historical continuum, and re-script associations that can be drawn between himself and the old regime. The marriage uniting France and Austria was dynastically crucial, meaning Napoleon could utilise the elements of continuity and stability that the Austrian monarchy offered, in order to enhance the political settlements he was working towards. However from a different perspective, clear familial links can be drawn between Napoleon and the overthrown French royal family. By erecting a monument here, metres taller than any other monarchical monument, crowned with his

³⁷ For more information: Pugin 1829:33; Sutcliffe 1996:42-3

³⁸ The column was a source of fascination in Britain too; an 1833 article discussed how originally it was proposed as a celebration of the Departments of France (*Freemans's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* 10 July 1833). A similar column topped by a statue of Napoleon can be found at Wimille in northern France.

statue that gazes over Paris and across to Austria; Napoleon effectively compresses the memory of the monarchy, devaluating their significance in contemporary events.

Arguably, Trajan's Column is the forerunner for all such French columns (Figure 56).³⁹ The Vendôme pillar is stone, and coated in a bronze relief, forged from captured enemy cannons; Trajan's is carved marble and the twisting frieze depicts his victories against the Dacians (Figures 57 and 58).⁴⁰ The unreadable nature of the relief makes it a complex experience for a viewer. Only the base of each is directly readable and the iconographic symbolism of the 'unfolding ascending spiral of history' as described by Matsudu (1996:30), crowned with a statue of Napoleon, makes this an important piece of monumental propaganda which simultaneously and confusingly expects a great deal and very little from its audience. Viewers are asked to take much of the shaft's upper detail for granted, or to have enough education and knowledge to cast Trajan's monument as a comparative. In Gaze terms, the 'crowning' statue of Napoleon can see everything and be seen and as such is a controlling presence: one might imagine that his gaze is focused across the continent to Rome on his fellow crowning model, St Peter, surmounting Trajan's Column.⁴¹ Together the two columns almost act like map pins on a physical atlas, pinpointing the exact positions of the two most important imperial cities in contemporary Europe.

³⁹ Ridley (1992:1 and passim) provides us with a detailed and extensive resource of the Napoleonic involvement in Rome.

⁴⁰ Cannons from victories at Ulm and Vienna were smelted down. For more information on the use of iron in Napoleonic building work see: Steiner 1981

⁴¹ The history of the capital of this column is varied and indicative of the various regime changes Paris witnessed during the following 100 years. For more on this: Mirzoeff 1995:84-87; Huet in Edwards (ed) 2007: 53-70

Case Study IV: Restorations in Rome

As a key model for the new French imperial capital, Rome has a special place in this study. Under French rule the city was paradoxically plundered of emblematic and significant artworks while several of its monuments were restored; essentially, key sites such as the Forum Romanum and Trajan's Forum were more fully uncovered to the world by the French occupiers, than ever before.⁴² The French created space to expose and glorify ancient architecture, particularly in locations with strong imperial connections. Contemporary public interest in excavations of ancient sites had bloomed into a fashionable curiosity since the discovery of Pompeii. Josephine had seen these during her stay in Naples while avoiding the Egyptian expedition and brought many artefacts and designs back to Paris. Chateau Malmaison, the couple's house on the outskirts of the city, became a carefully cultivated fantasy of fashionable 'antiquity' and offered a specially developed backdrop for presenting Napoleon as Emperor, heir to empires and the founder of a dynasty.⁴³

Napoleon's interest in Rome dates from at least 1797 and he was continually aware of the power of 'Rome' as a propaganda concept.⁴⁴ He knew of the military history and ideological symbolism he was re-enacting by invading Italy, across the Alps, evoking Hannibal's crossing, and this was visually re-imagined in David's *Napoleon Crossing the*

⁴² The locations of these remains have been highlighted on Map II.

⁴³ This house still is a museum to the empire and Classical style. Its Classical Roman features include an atrium, tesserae mosaics and wall frescos throughout. The decoration was influenced by Josephine's admiration of Pompeii. A recent exhibition *De Pompéi à Malmaison, les Antiques de Joséphine* at Chateau Malmaison (22 October 2008- 27 January 2009) showcased her collection of artefacts from the ancient city.

⁴⁴ British newspapers report that Napoleon sent for his family to come to Rome in 1797: *London Chronicle*, 17 August 1797. On his coronation in 1804 Napoleon also became the self-titled King of Rome; he later bestowed the name on his son.

Alps at the Great Saint Bernard Pass (1801) (Figure 59).⁴⁵ Although he never reached Rome, there is evidence he had plans for the city. During his reign he had designs drawn up for a new palace in the city. This structure, worthy of a modern emperor, was designed by Scipione Perosini and would have stretched from the Colosseum across the Forum and onto the Capitoline hill.⁴⁶ It would have placed Napoleon at the heart of ancient governmental power and made him the latest occupant of an ancient imperial neighbourhood; creating the impression that he had just as much right to rule Rome as he had Paris.

Trajan's Column and Forum were the focus of early excavations and restoration work. Although the antiquities had not been deserted by the Romans it was French money that allowed large scale restorations to occur, employing scores of local people: Napoleon ensured one million francs was available to finance the works. Trajan's Forum had been cleared of medieval structures by Pope Paul III in 1549 but a convent and a church remained.⁴⁷ Napoleon decreed that the convent should be demolished as soon as the *Commission des Embellissements*, set up by him in 1811, was established. The contemporary buildings were simply in the way of his imperial vision for Rome and had to be removed no matter what their significance to the modern city.⁴⁸ Similar work was carried out 120 years later by Mussolini in clearing the Imperial Fora, to create another

⁴⁵ This painting shows the names of Hannibal and Charlemagne carved alongside 'Bonaparte' in the rocks at his feet.

⁴⁶ The plan was far too extravagant to be taken seriously and abandoned by the French.

⁴⁷ The religious buildings, the church of S. Maria di Loreto and the convent of S. Eufemia and S. Spirito had been deliberately built on the pagan site. See: Ridley 1992: 152-166

⁴⁸ It is perhaps indicative that no Romans bid for the tender of this demolition so workmen were drafted in for the destructive work. Previous demolitions had been let out by tender including that of a macaroni factory on the site. Ultimately the demolitions proved too expensive and the church remained. See: Ridley 1992:154

emblematic axis, from Capitoline to Colosseum when he removed many of the old medieval structures in the city.⁴⁹

The French planned a new square for the area, a large elliptical piazza with steps and a fountain at one end to balance the Column (Figure 60). This suggests a desire by the French to remodel the ancient space as they had in contemporary Paris, creating large areas for monuments to be admired and comprehended in a newly reinvigorated context of Napoleonic beneficence. Mrs Eaton tells us ‘they walled in the space they cleared’ (1852:208) which suggests that as with the *Champs-Élysées* the Napoleonic regime wanted to contain the space.⁵⁰ She goes onto regret ‘more deeply that they did not continue their labours’ (1852:208) of excavation and restoration, but seem rather to have continued their attempts to control the size and nature of the space. Thus they were exerting command over the ancient Column which in turn exercises control over the people who come into the space. Cavallaro responding to Lacan suggests, ‘The inanimate world watches us to the extent there is inevitably someone or something that expects us to see things in certain ways’ (2001:134). In terms of the inanimate Trajan’s Column, a viewer is expected to see afresh the antiquities and through their presentation, the achievements of the French – the Column offers to the French the prospect of a panoptic gaze.⁵¹ French superiority is compromised however by the image of St Peter atop the Column; he offers a Christianising Gaze both over the newly excavated ruins but also as I have suggested across the continent to Paris. In keeping St Peter the French demonstrated

⁴⁹ The recent exhibition *Via dell’Impero – Nascita di una strada* (23 July-20 September 2009) at the Capitoline Museum highlighted the creation of this axis.

⁵⁰ Rebecca Eaton an Englishwoman lived in Rome shortly after the French left. She produced a guidebook to the city and its ruins. The clearing work included excavating drains and removing centuries of grime from the Column. This is described in a very useful guidebook by Joseph Forsyth an Englishman who continued to journey around Europe during the Napoleonic era, at a time when many of his fellow countrymen were put off continental travel. See: Forsyth 1818:125

⁵¹ The French excavations had lowered the ground level of Trajan’s Forum. See: Ridley 1992; Salmon 1995

their dominance in two ways. Firstly he is a reminder that the French are excavating far further than previous pontiffs, showing dedication to the ancient site that exceeds Christian attempts to recuperate and display it. Secondly the Vendôme Column is several metres taller than its ancient cousin and covered in iron, a relatively new building material that has military connotations and enduring qualities.⁵² Rather than honour the image of St Peter by preserving him on the Column they would subject him to the gaze of the people accessing the site from the French-made piazza, ultimately demonstrating French superiority and control.

The Forum was also subject to extensive restoration work.⁵³ When the French arrived in Rome the Forum was buried, the ground level four meters above the ancient surface.⁵⁴ The French began clearing the space of houses, building drains and excavating the land. There were also plans to create a public garden, reminiscent of the Tuileries named the *Jardin du Capitole*.⁵⁵ Ridley suggests, '[t]he Forum would thus be a promenade for pedestrians, and carriages could circle the Palatine' (1992:140): such a plan sounds similar to the imperial 'zone' formed in Paris. If the remodelled Forum was to boast a garden and wide promenading space we can surely draw comparisons between the developments of the two cities. I suggest that both were developed along similar lines and so began to reflect one another. This indicates that rather than Rome inspiring Paris there is a more mutual appreciation developing. We can see the beginnings of a pleasing and inspiring conversation between the ancient and modern imperial cities during this

⁵² Steiner (1981) discusses French construction involving iron.

⁵³ The Septimius Severus Arch, previously buried to halfway up the lateral arches was cleared. Similarly the Arch of Titus was cleared of surrounding medieval buildings but left in a weakened state: Ridley 1992:241

⁵⁴ It was used as a public rubbish dump: Ridley 1992:137; Salmon 1995

⁵⁵ Ridley (1992:139-140) tells us this would have spread from the Capitol to the Arch of Constantine.

period. It shows that under Napoleon the French were developing clear ideas of what an imperial city should be. They were not building a simple imitation but developing a new architectural style and so created the Classically inspired face of Napoleonic imperialism.

This chapter has discussed the development of Napoleon's imperial urban production in Paris. It has highlighted clear similarities with the remaining structures of ancient Rome and the Classically re-imagined monuments they inspired in Paris. The Parisian examples I have discussed are clear examples of restyled Classical antiquity, not only represented in their decoration and visual similarities but in their position within the city. The Arc de Triomphe represents the continuum of French history, highlighting previous regimes to support Napoleon's power and subsequently utilised by King Louis-Philippe, demonstrated by the subtle changes in symbols and inscriptions around the Arc. Napoleon from his position of display on monuments such as the Arc and crown of the Vendôme Column successfully imprinted his authority and magnificence, onto the topography of the city. The importance of the Champs-Élysées axis that lanced the various ideologically important locations has also been demonstrated. This axis acted like a current electrifying and uniting these various locations and so formed the backbone for a Napoleonic precinct of power. In such swift and radical development Napoleon created a palimpsestic area that utilised the monarchical associations to demonstrate his own progressive imperial power, rather than fully destroy them. The presence of the Carrousel arch, embraced by the wings of the Louvre confirms the intentions of this route as a generic ancient styled Roman way, confirmed by the procession that took place on it. However the French did not simply plunder Rome, firstly of its monuments and then its architectural and spatial designs – they exposed the ancient city, leaving a legacy of new

consideration and conservation for the monuments. This was another attempt to demonstrate power and command not only over the people but over the very history of the city. Napoleon clearly had plans for Rome but lost his empire too swiftly for them to be executed. Instead Paris became in a short space of time a new imperial capital, demonstrating a modern command over the remains of ancient Rome that developed into an enduring artistic and architectural style which glorified the emperor long after the demise of his reign.

CONCLUSION

This work has shown how and why emblems from various periods of antiquity influenced the architectural and artistic production of Napoleon's reign. I have explored the appeal of using ancient Roman and Egyptian civilisations as artistic, architectural, spatial, and cultural models, through specific examples that have indicated much about Napoleonic and ultimately French attitudes to antiquity.

After the Terror, the Directory and subsequently Napoleon stepped into an ideological vacuum, which presented problems of self definition for the newly Republican France. Shifting the identity of the Louvre was a crucial way of filling that vacuum. By presenting trophies of conquest, that simultaneously demonstrated French superiority to the rest of modern and ancient Europe, a fresh French identity was inaugurated. This identity offered two distinct cultural opportunities. Firstly it provided the Republic a justification for its existence – it was their Republican right to own and protect these relics of antiquity exemplified particularly in the symbolic repatriation of the *Dying Gaul*. Secondly it offered the ordinary citizen control over the past and the opportunity to view the demise of the old regime and the strength and power of the new Republic as the Louvre became a centre of national identity.

Napoleon altered and amplified these cultural opportunities for the purposes of imperial glory. He highlighted the supportive ancient connections offered by the *Laocoön* and *Apollo Belvedere* and along with the *Quadriga* these artworks became the visual evidence in Paris of his industry and expansion and helped to form a suitable Romanesque backdrop for his quintessentially Roman styled regime. By associating himself

with the history of these pieces he drew on the plethora of ancient imperial connections that infused these pieces. This then supported his position as a modern emperor as he fashioned his own imperial identity and worked towards a new political settlement.

Napoleon wrote himself into the history of these pieces by accommodating them in the Musée Napoleon. By consolidating the collection of antiquity under his own name, the artworks became compliant visual supports demonstrating the power of his regime. In publically presenting antiquity under the banner of the Musée Napoleon the emperor forced the viewing French public to comprehend his power and contextualise their own imperial identity within the regime.

Ancient Egyptian antiquity gave the French a new set of ancient untainted paradigms thus creating the opportunity for society, which had destroyed so much of its recent history, to craft crucial new cultural memories. Napoleon used Egyptian antiquity differently, shining Egyptian art and architecture through a Classical filter until it created the imperial image he wanted to portray. The brief success of the Egyptian expedition had quickened his accession to the upper echelons of power; and by presenting it as victory in propaganda such as the *Frontispiece* he produced an enduring Augustan style branding of imagery and associations that supported his position as emperor. However, Egyptian imagery was never as compliant as that of imperial Rome for Napoleon and I have shown in drawing comparisons between the Fontaine du Fellah and Fontaine de la Victoire, that crucial to the success of Egyptian antiquity as a propagandic tool, was the utilisation, simultaneously of clear Classical imagery and ideology. Only when the two civilisations were visually combined could succour for Napoleon's reign be achieved.

The erection of the Luxor obelisk shows that Egyptian architecture did regain the original purpose I suggested it was intended to represent: to symbolise new cultural comprehension and to form the basis for modern French identity. Its presentation in the Place de la Concorde I believe indicates that despite Egyptian imagery and architecture becoming hybrid with Classical features during Napoleon's reign, ancient Egypt as a foundation source was still resonant long after the first cultural explosion of Egyptomania.

Napoleonic artistic and architectural propaganda was definitely more inspired by the structures of Classical Rome. The Arc de Triomphe, Carrousel Arch and Vendôme Column show how the images of antiquity displayed in the Louvre and the French involvements with Rome were translated to create the imperial nucleus of Paris. The Champs-Élysées axis was re-invented, its old monarchical identity superseded as it became the backbone of a Napoleon-specific zone; punctuated by Roman-style triumphal arches and physically enclosed by the antiquity crammed Louvre. This area became a palimpsestic physical document of recent French history, drawing on the images and emblems of antiquity to overwrite more recent associations with the displaced monarchy. The potency of this area and its links to the power of antiquity were enduring, making King Louis-Philippe want to immortalise himself as Napoleon's Classically styled equal.

Napoleon's Classical portrayal, surrounded by repackaged yet resonant emblems of power and his own victories, on the Arc de Triomphe united this area, his Gaze enforcing, even posthumously, his own imperial image onto the surrounding space. Similarly his statue, as the crown of the Classical Vendôme Column, gazes over Paris, superior to its Roman cousin. The Classical style Column simultaneously assuaged

dynastical doubts and linked Napoleon to a specifically imperial image of Roman antiquity. Collectively the Parisian re-imagined Roman-style architecture cast Napoleon as heir to ancient emperors, giving him a specific position with a long historical panorama yet still the invented modern nature of the architecture connected him to the future – anchoring him in the dynastical and political settlement he was trying to achieve.

The French achievements in Rome concluded my discussion and suggested a pleasing and mutually inspiring conversation had evolved between the two cities, as the spatial configuration of the imperial nuclei of each began to reflect one another. Having plundered the city of its artwork, the French were subsequently highly involved with the excavations, renovations and restorations of the ancient parts of the city and their attitude to the remains set a precedent of conservation for future generations.

I have highlighted various Classical emblems that were employed to decorate Napoleon's reign. The imperial eagle peppered Napoleon's propaganda linking him to ancient imperial armies and features on every Parisian architectural example I have discussed. A clearly Classical image its development into a Napoleonic symbol shows how fully his regime internalised ancient Roman imagery in epistemological terms and mastered it taxonomically, simultaneously evolving monarchical symbols into the emblems of a new empire. Laurel crowns were used as common symbols of victory that furnished Napoleon with the accessory most associated with Roman emperors. Utilising this emblem within art and architecture instantly imbues the celebrated events of the reign with connotations of a comparable imperial Roman victory. When crowning Napoleon's image, the laurel crown instantly places him alongside generic ancient emperors and as the heir to an imperial dynastic progression.

Ultimately this study has demonstrated that the art and architecture produced during the Napoleonic period did employ the imagery and ideology of ancient Rome and Egypt. I believe this was done for two key reasons. Antiquity offered a new set of paradigms for the French people to contextualise their history and contemplate various regime changes. Antiquity as an artistic and architectural mode of national self expression was unparalleled during this period. For Napoleon, Roman antiquity particularly offered an impressive visual and ideological foundation for his empire. Displaying himself as the equal, or better, of ancient predecessors enhanced his position, power and stability. Although ultimately much of the imagery was re-fashioned and rebranded to form the face of a modern imperial empire, I have shown the ancient associations are clear. Antiquity in Napoleon's hands decorated the empire with resonant symbols of power, placed him swiftly and effectively within an imperial dynasty and had a massive topographic impact on Paris, still clearly visible and resonant today.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1



The Laocöon, Vatican Museums, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 2



Jean Pierre Droz, decorative medal: the reverse celebrates the Conquest of Istria, and shows the restored Temple of Augustus at Pola, minted in 1806
Number 512 in the Bramsen collection.

Figure 3



Bertrand Andrieu, decorative medal: the obverse shows Napoleon's head crowned with laurels and the reverse shows the Laocoön at the centre of the Salle de Laocoön in the Musée Napoléon, minted in 1804, Bramsen 367

Figure 4



The Apollo Belvedere, Vatican Museums, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 5



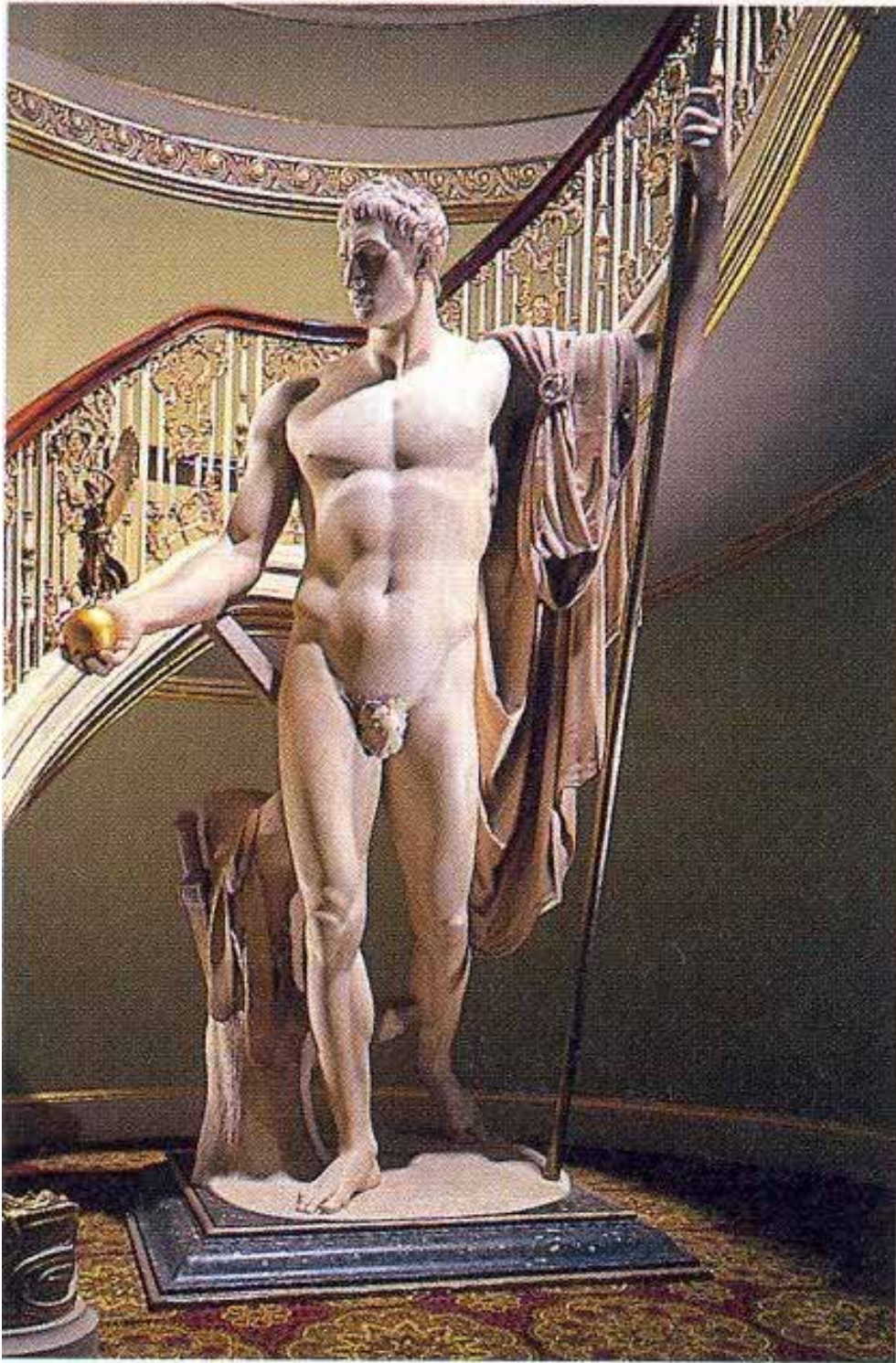
Anonymous etching, *Napoleon Bonaparte showing the Apollo Belvedere to his Deputies*, c.1800, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Figure 6



Bertrand Andrieu, decorative medal: the reverse showing the Apollo Belvedere at the centre of the Salle de L'Apollon in the Musée Napoléon, minted in 1804, Bramsen 371

Figure 7



Antonio Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1806, Apsley House, London
Anonymous Photograph

Figure 8



The Dying Gaul, Capitoline Museums, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 9



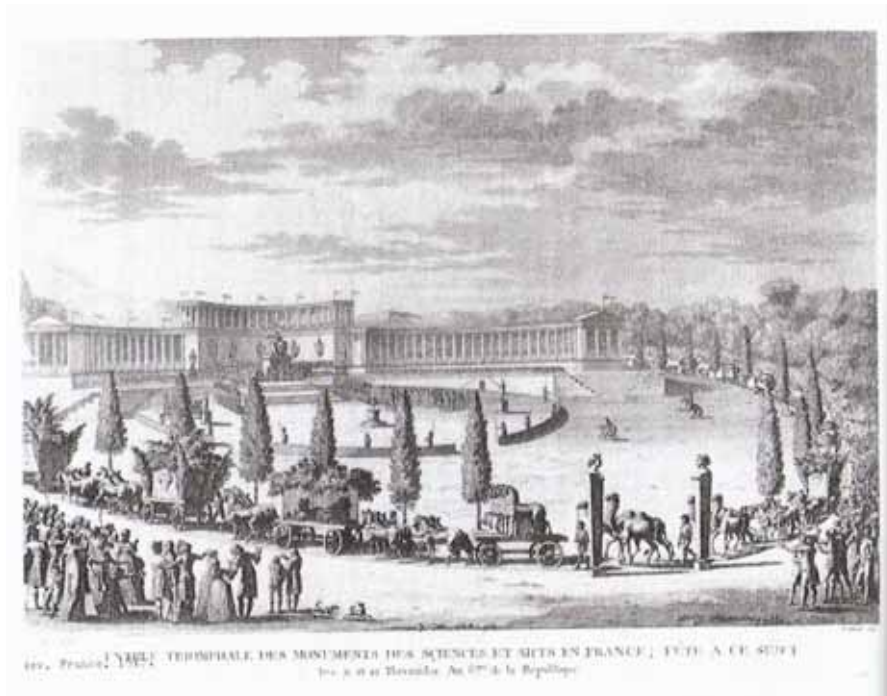
The original bronze *Quadriga*, Basilica di San Marco, Venice
Photograph courtesy of <http://philip.greenspun.com>

Figure 10



Anonymous sketch, *The Horses of St Marks being Shipped to France*, 1797
University of Reading Library

Figure 11



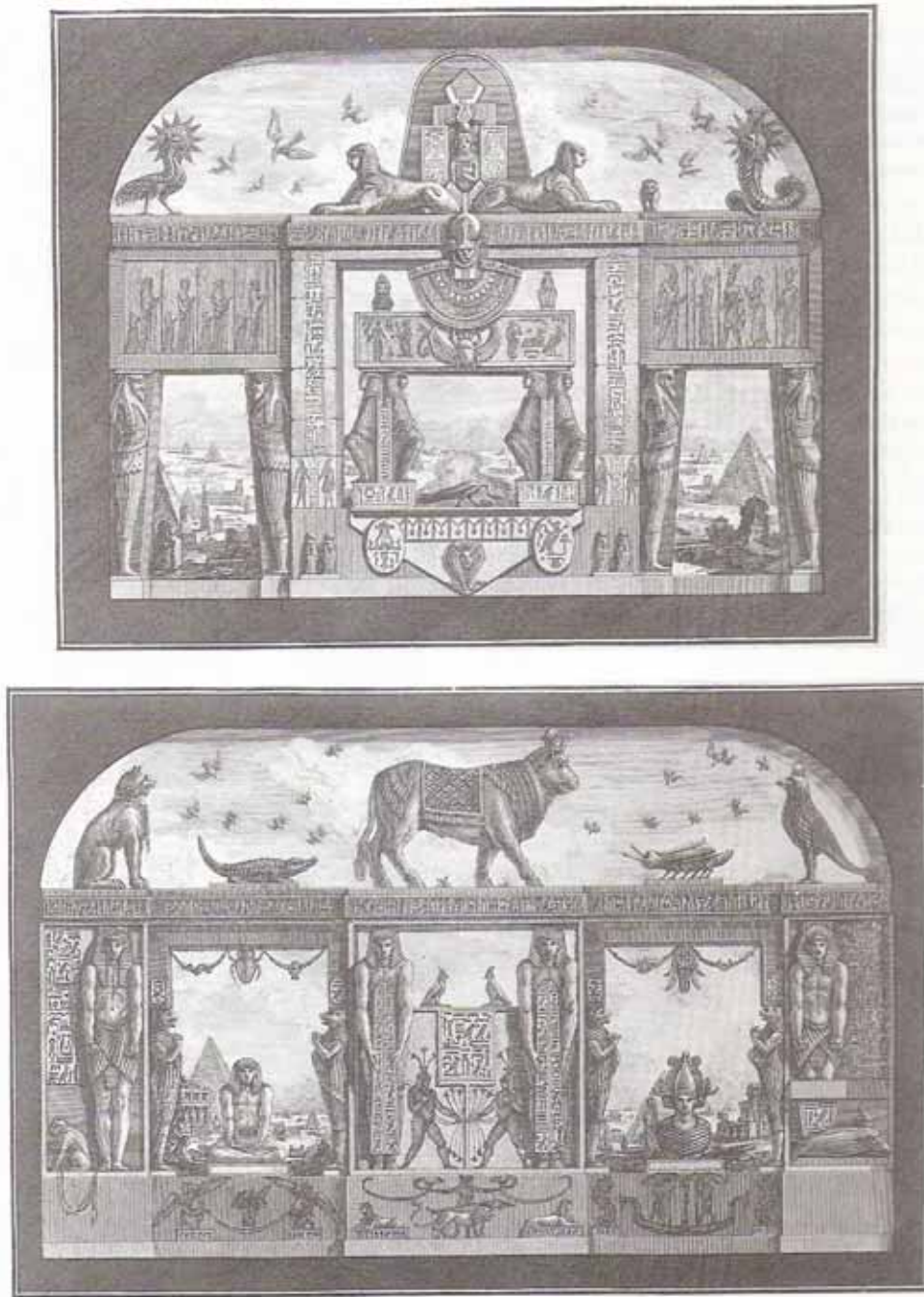
Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, *Triumphal Entry of the Monuments of the Arts and Sciences*, 9 and 10 Thermidor Year VI, 1798, engraving.
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Figure 12



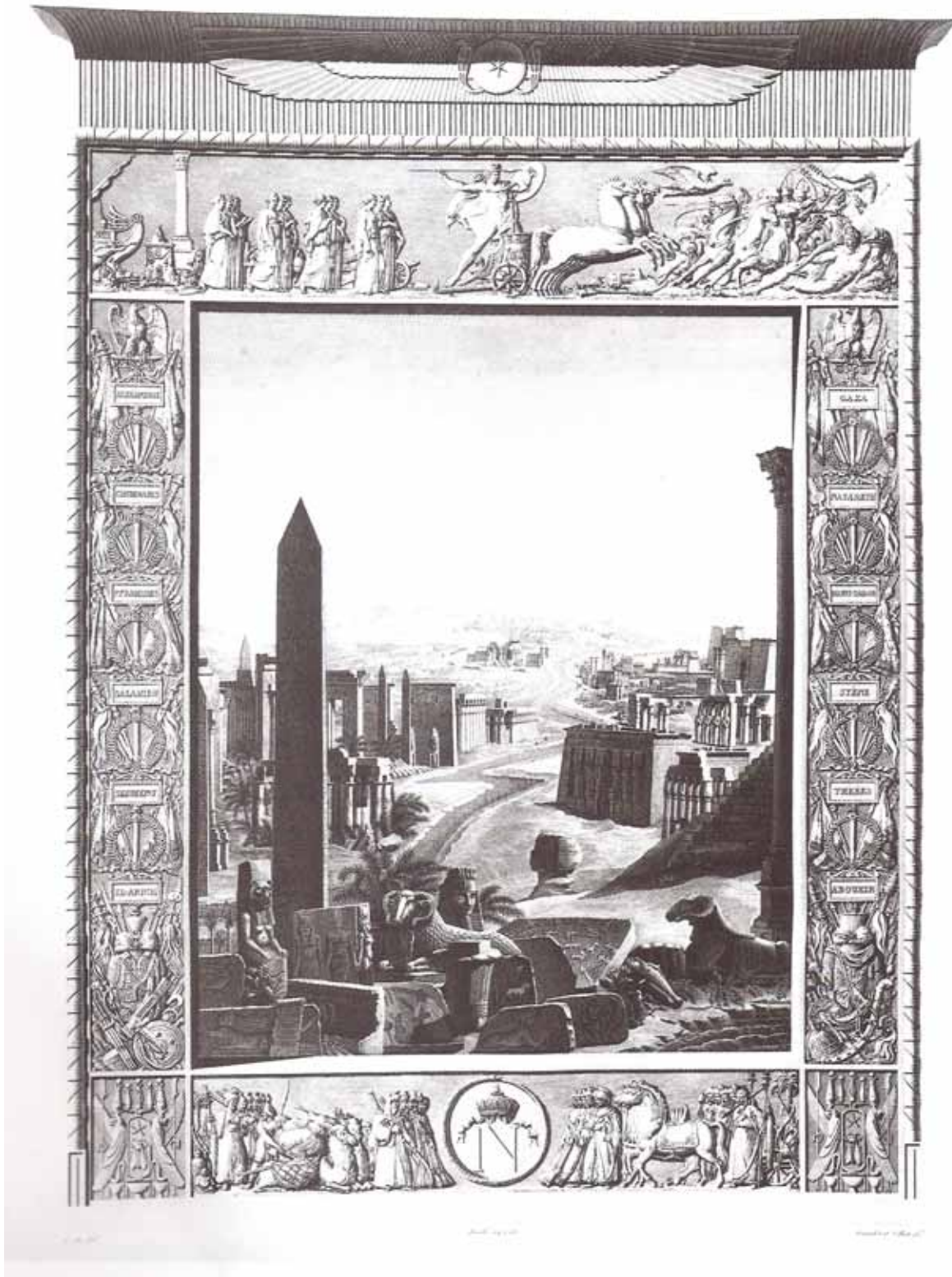
The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, Paris
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

Figure 13



Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Designs for the walls of the Caffè degl'Inglesi, in the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, 1769,
First published: Piranesi 1769

Figure 14



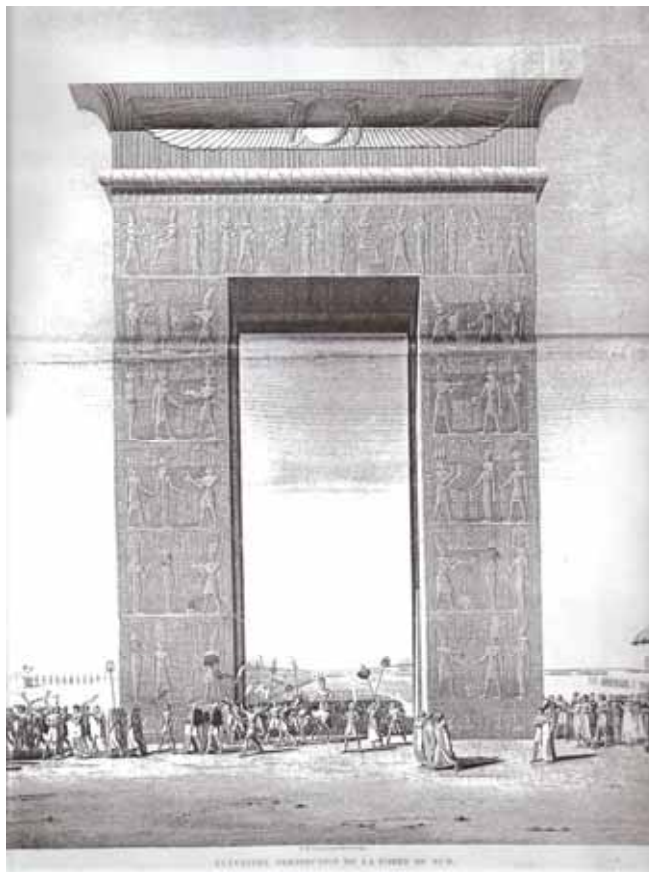
Dominique Vivant Denon, *The Frontispiece* from the first edition of the *Description de l'Égypte*, 1809

Figure 15



Engraving of an Imperial Eagle from the inside of the Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

Figure 16



The South Propylon at Thebes, Karnak taken from the Volume III, Plate 51 of the
Description de l'Égypte, 1809

Figure 17



The Fontaine du Fella, Rue de Sèvres, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 18



The Fontaine de la Victoire, Place du Châtelet, Paris
Anonymous photograph, June 2006

Figure 19



The Luxor Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

Figure 20



Detail of the Antinous figure from the
Fontaine du Fella
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 21



Statue of Antinous from Hadrian's Villa,
Vatican Museum, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 22



Detail of the Imperial Eagle from the Fontaine du Fella
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 23



The Hypostyle of the Main Temple of Philae Perspective View, showing engravings of palm leaves, taken from the Volume I, Plate 18 of the *Description de l'Égypte*, 1809

Figure 24



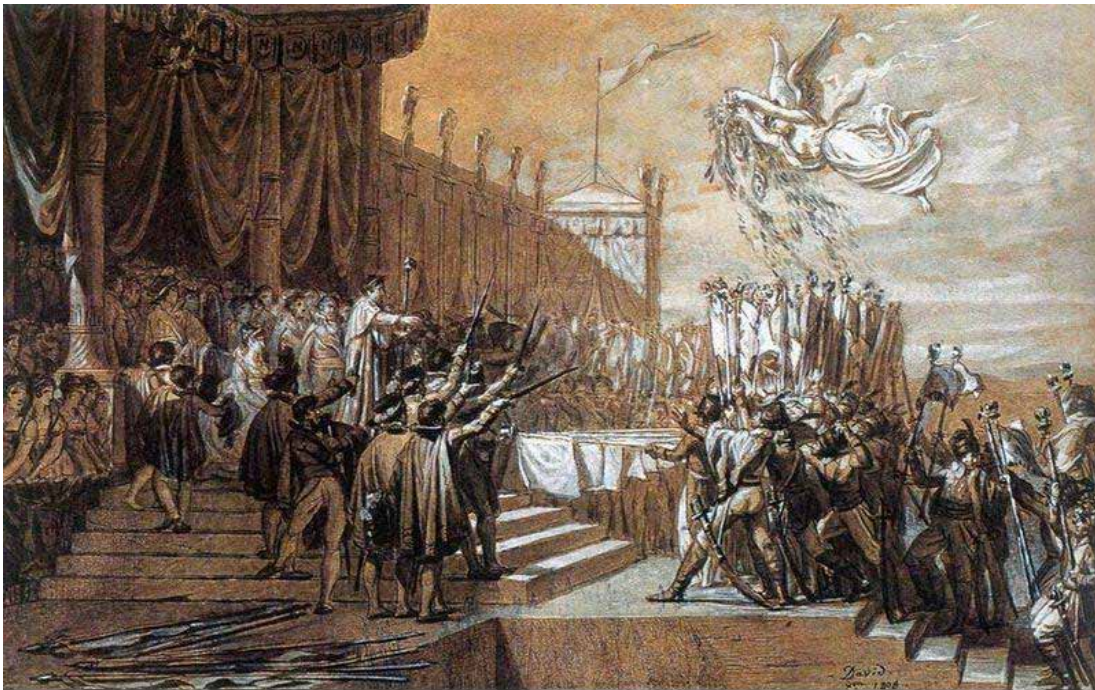
Detail of the Fontaine de la Victoire showing the Classically dressed figures embracing the base of the monument.
Anonymous Photograph, May 2008

Figure 25



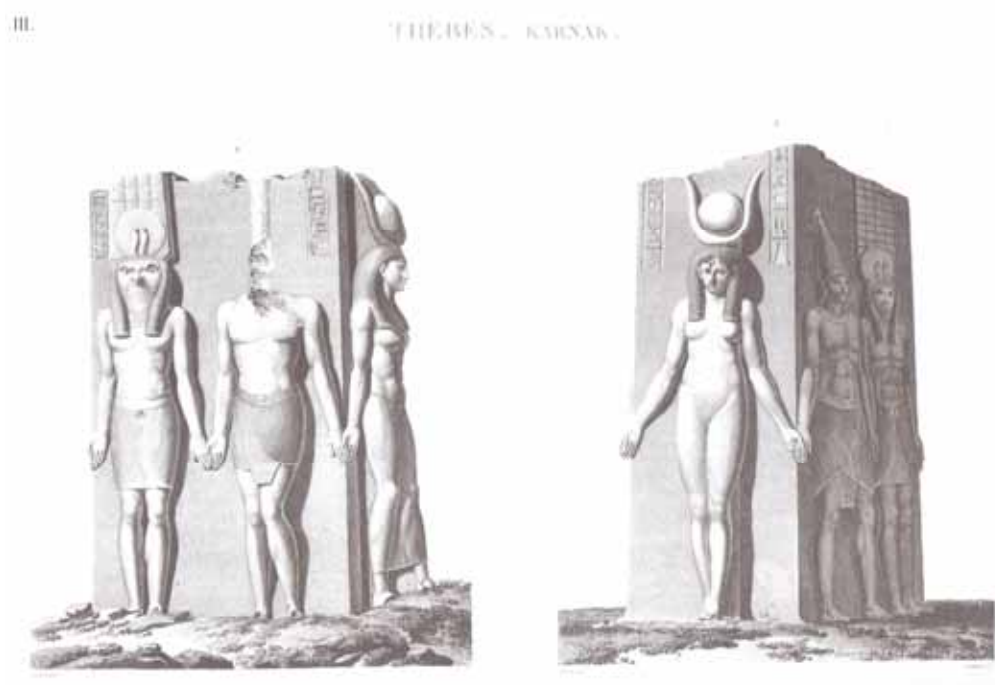
Detail of the winged figure crowning the column of the Fontaine de la Victoire.
Anonymous photograph, January 2010

Figure 26



Jacques-Louis David, *Sketch of the Distribution of the Eagles*, 1808,
pen and ink wash, 181 x 290cm
Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Figure 27



Sculpted block of granite from Karnak, taken from Volume III, Plate 31 of the *Description de l'Égypte*, 1809

Figure 28



Detail of the base of the Fontaine de la Victoire showing, the cornucopias and Imperial Eagle

Photograph courtesy of www.lartnouveau.com

Figure 29



The *Genius of Augustus*, Vatican Museums, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 30



Statue of the god of the Nile, Vatican Museums, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 31



Detail of the cornucopias on the statue of the god of the Nile, Vatican Museums Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 32



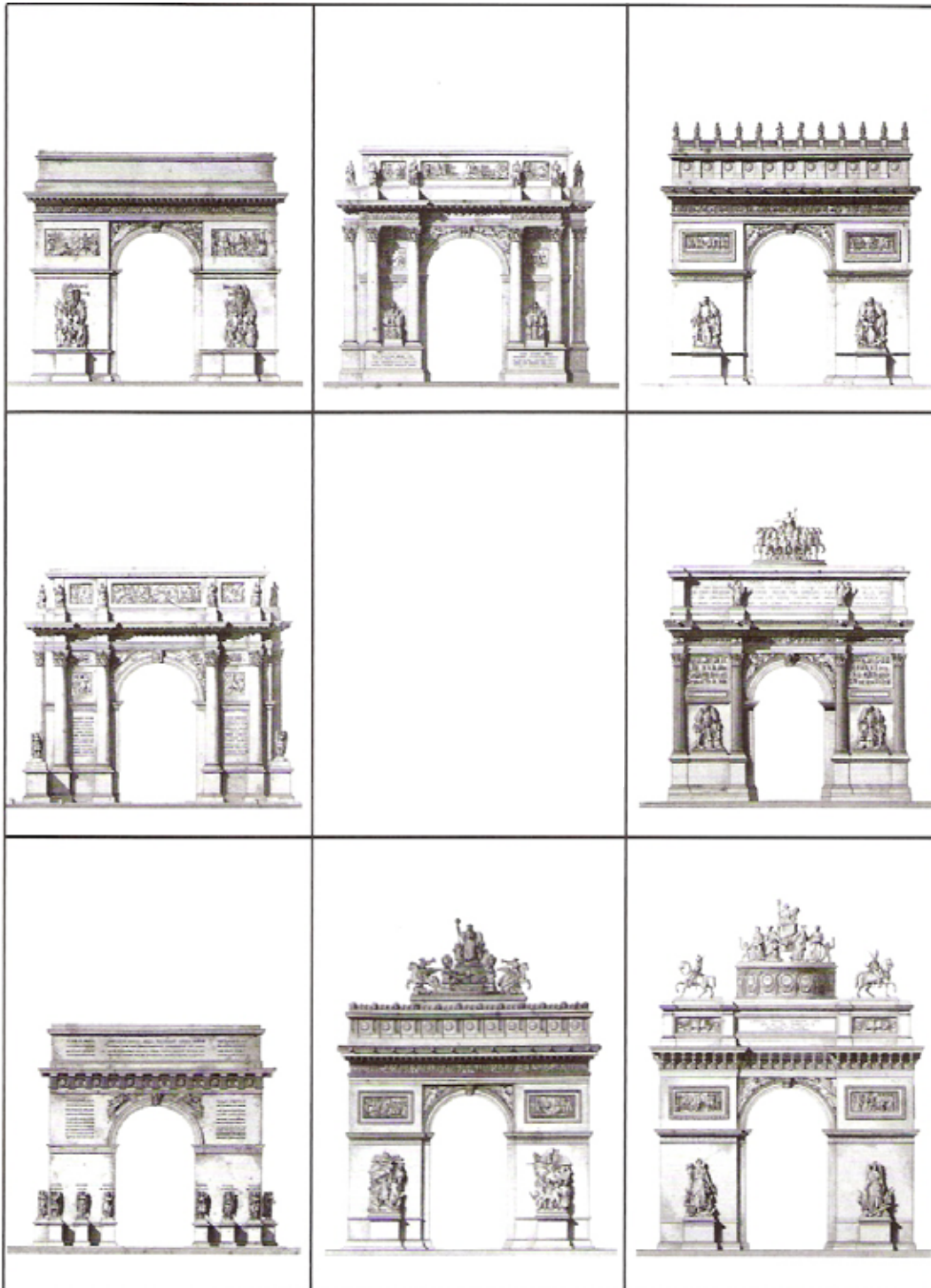
View from the Place de la Concorde up the Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

Figure 33



Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 34



Jean-Baptiste Chalgrin, Nicholas Huyot and Raymond Blouet, early studies for the Arc de Triomphe

Figure 35



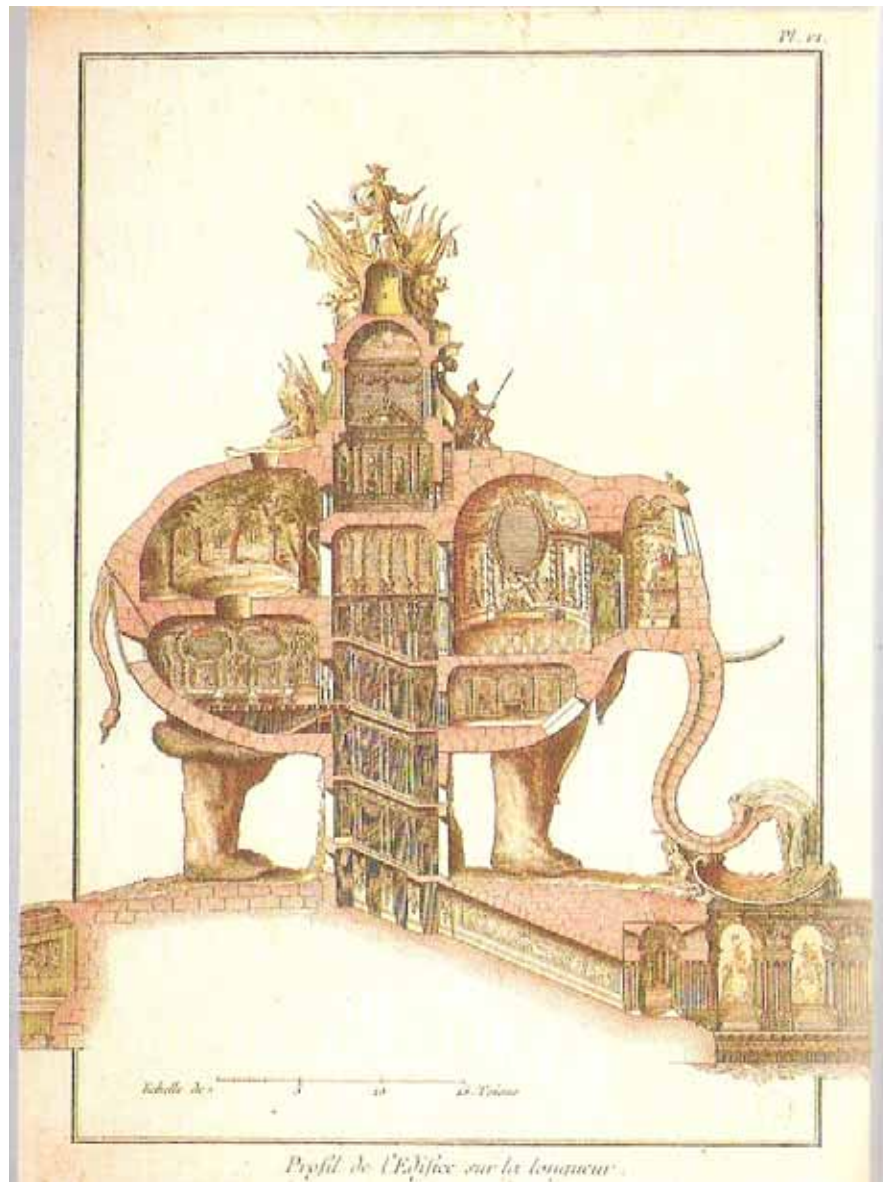
Arch of Titus, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 36



Eagle relief from the Arch of Titus
Photograph by Diana Spencer, January 2008

Figure 37



Ribart de Chamoust, Longitudinal section for an elephant shaped fountain on the Place de l'Etoile, 1758, gouache engraving Musée Carnavalet, Paris

Figure 38



Jean-Pierre Cortot, *Triumph of Napoleon*, c.1835,
South East Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 39



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon on the Imperial Throne*, 1806,
oil on canvas, 259 x 162 cm
Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris

Figure 40



Detail of a triumphal procession, interior frieze, the Arch of Titus, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 41



Jacques-Louis David, *Distribution of the Eagles*, 1810, oil on canvas, 610 x 931cm
Musée National du Château Versailles, Paris

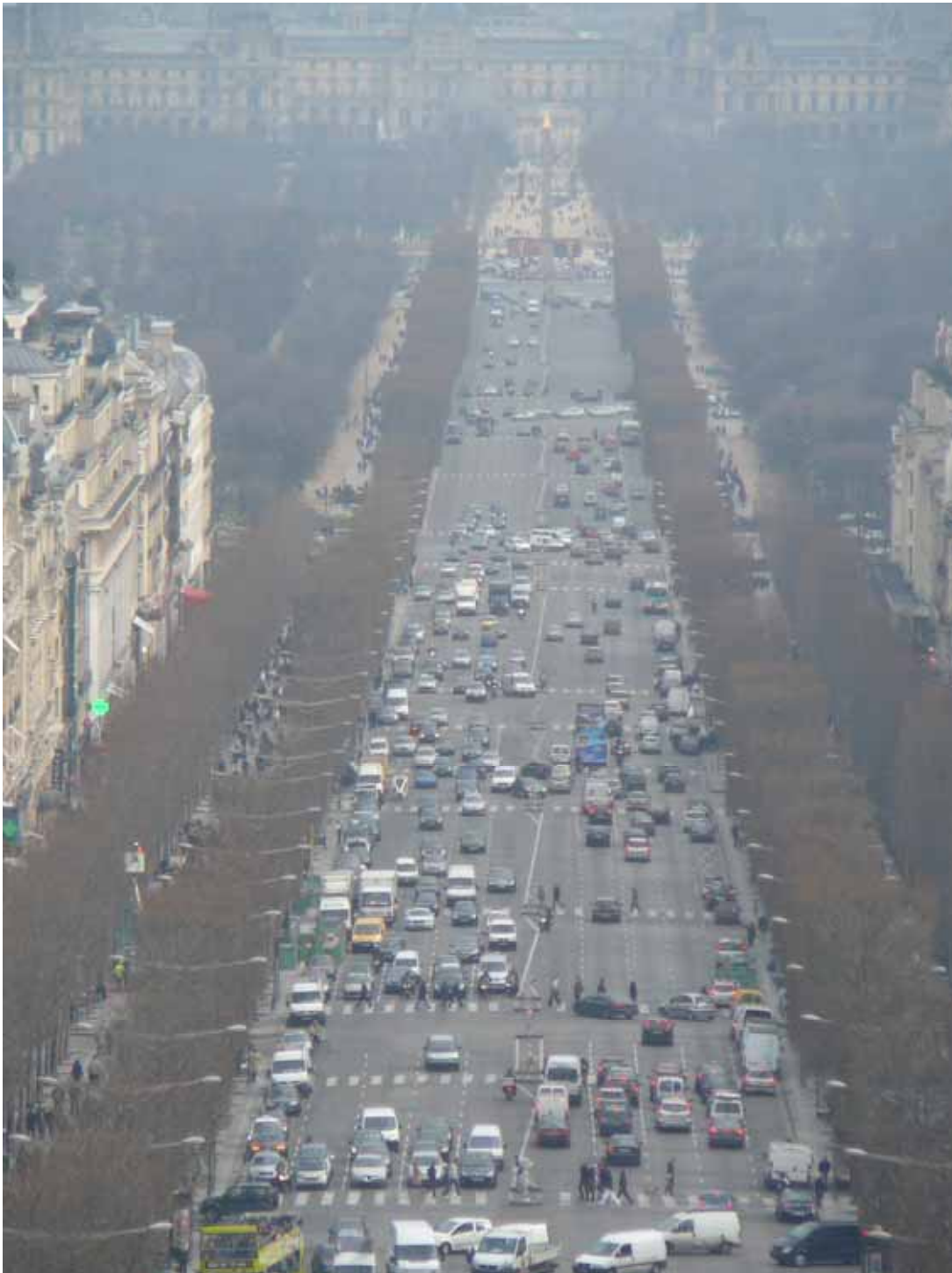
Figure 42



François Rude, *Departures of the Volunteers*, c.1835, North East Pillar,
Arc de Triomphe, Paris

Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 43



View of the Champs-Élysées, taken from the Arc de Triomphe, showing the Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries garden, where the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel can be seen against the backdrop of the Louvre
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 44



Antoine Etex, *Peace*, c.1835, North West Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 45



Antoine Etex, *Resistance*, c. 1835, South West Pillar, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 46



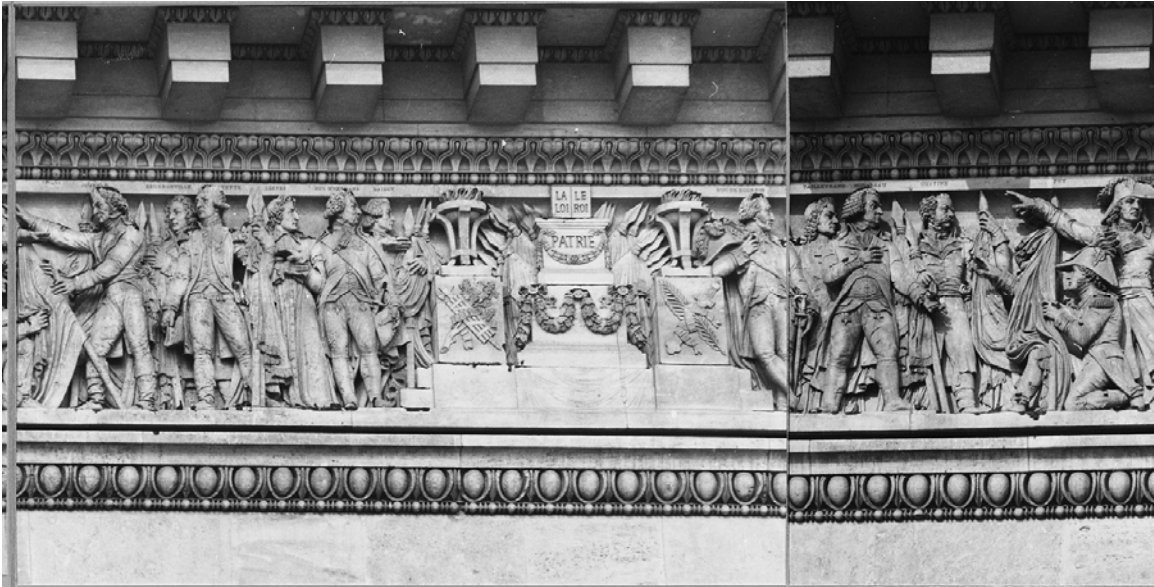
The Census Frieze from the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus c. 100 BC,
Musée de Louvre, Paris
Photograph courtesy of www.louvre.fr

Figure 47



Georges Jacquot, Detail from *The Departure of the Armies*, 1833-36,
frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Figure 48



Sylvestre Brun, Detail from *The Departure of the Armies*, 1834, showing the altar of the Fatherland, frieze on the entablature Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Figure 49



Medal depicting King Louis-Philippe I and Napoleon in the guise of Roman emperors, the obverse shows the completed Arc de Triomphe, c. 1836

Figure 50



François Rude, Detail from *The Return of the French Armies*, 1833-36,
frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Figure 51



Gabriel Bernard Seurre, Detail from the *Return of the French Armies*, 1833-36, showing
one of the victory arches and the transportation of a statue of the Nile,
frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Figure 52



Louis Caillouette, Detail from the *Return of the French Armies*, 1833-36, showing the seated personification of Victory at the centre of the procession, frieze on the entablature, Arc de Triomphe, Paris
Photograph courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Figure 53



Arch of Septimius Severus, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 54



Arch of Constantine, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 55



Vendôme Column, Place Vendôme, Paris
Photograph by Gwilym Wren, February 2009

Figure 56



Trajan's Column, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 57



Detail of the external frieze, the Vendôme Column, Place Vendôme, Paris
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

Figure 58



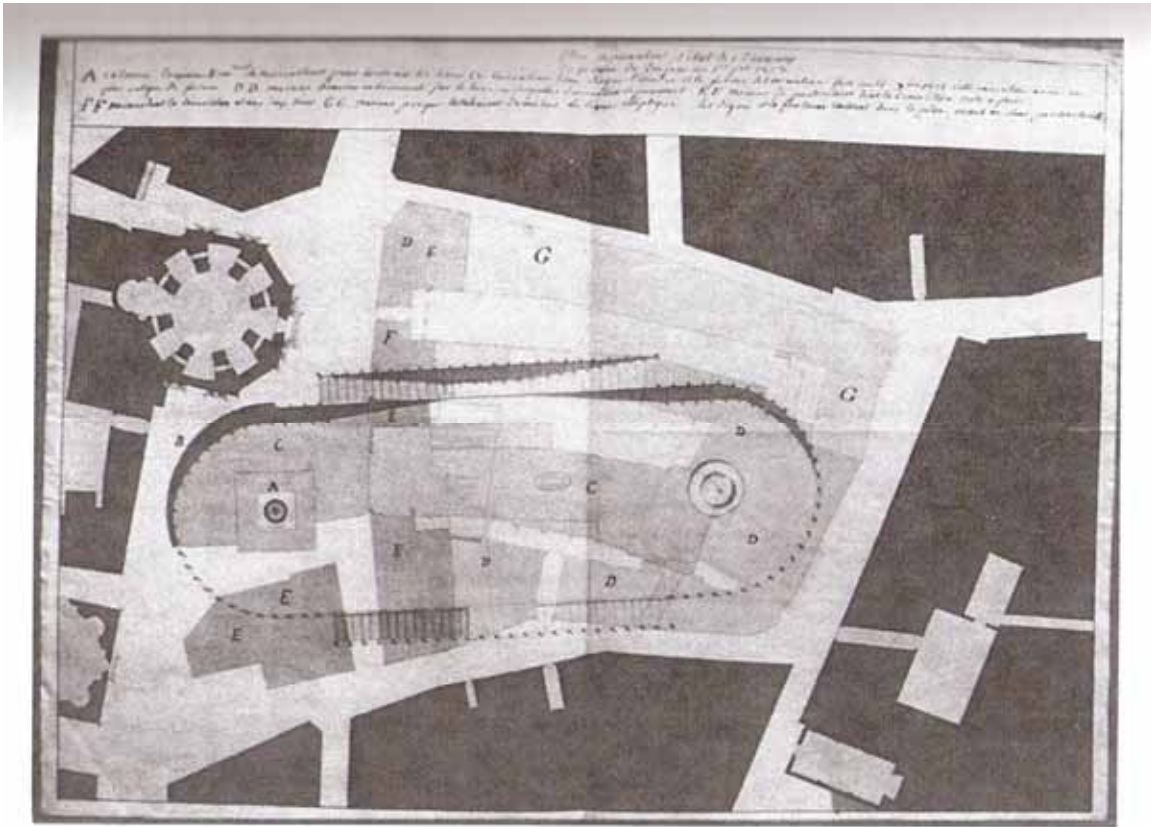
Detail of the external frieze, Trajan's Column, Rome
Photograph by Fanny Wren, March 2009

Figure 59



Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps at the Great Saint-Bernard Pass*,
1800, oil on canvas, 259 x 221 cm
Musée National du Château de Malmaison
Photograph by Fanny Wren, February 2009

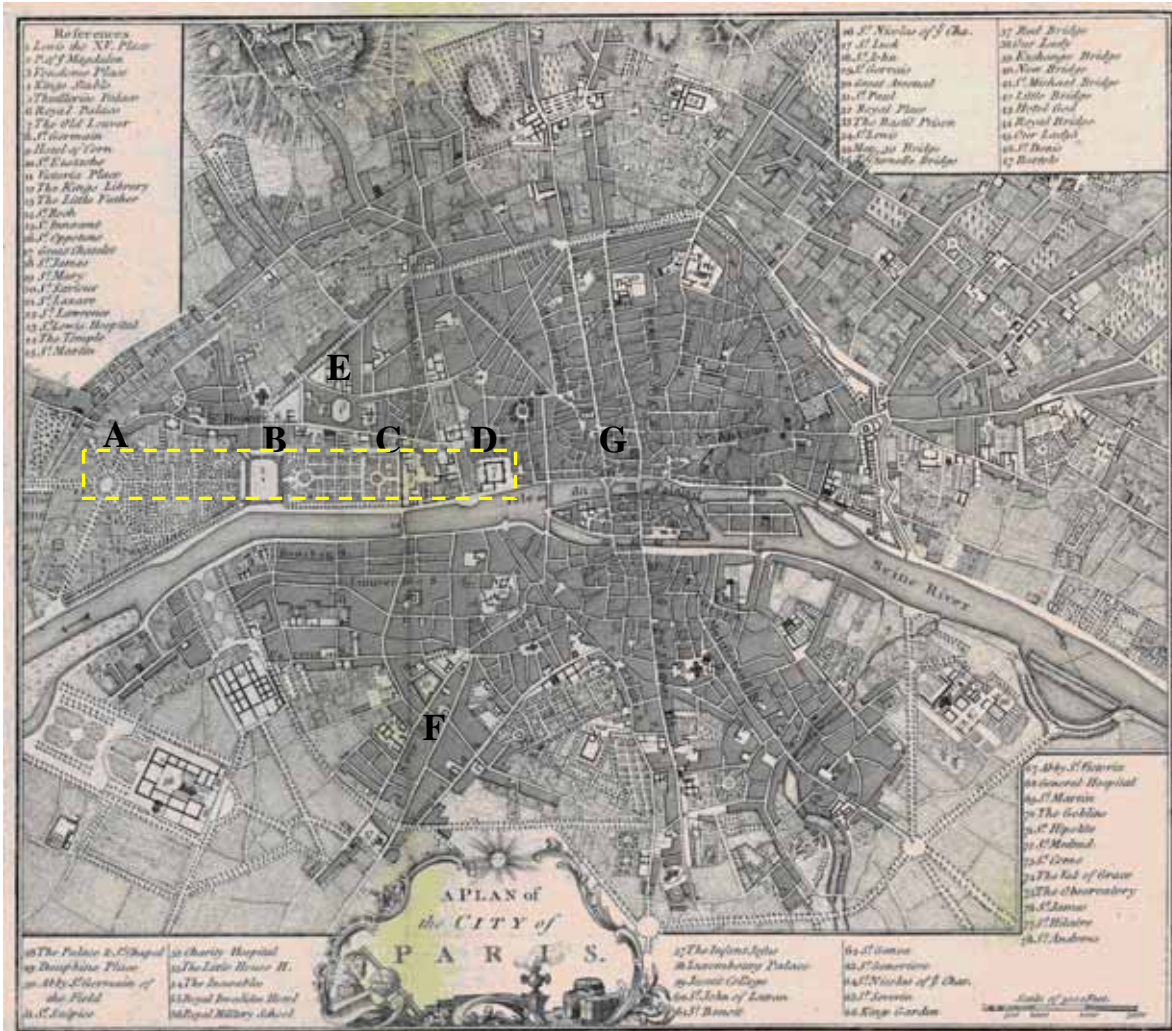
Figure 60



A plan for French building work in Trajan's Forum, including lateral stairways and a fountain, 1813 Archives Nationales, Paris

MAPS

Map I

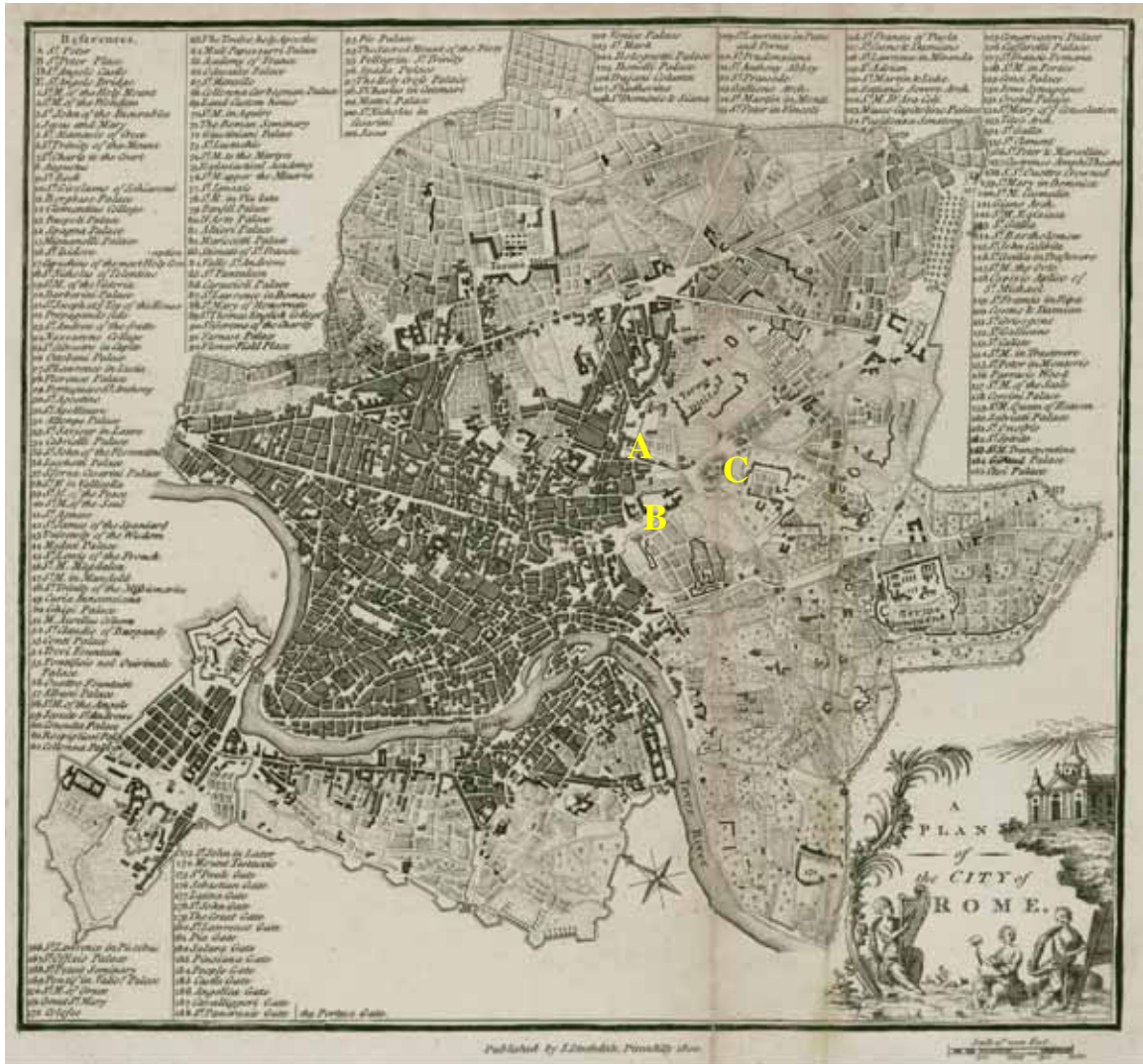


Map of Paris c.1800

- A- Place de l'Etoile and the Arc de Triomphe
- B- Place de la Concorde and the Luxor Obelisk
- C- Tuileries Garden and the Arc de Triomphe de Carrousel
- D- The Louvre
- E- Place Vendôme and the Vendôme Column
- F- Rue de Sèvres and the Fontaine du Fellah
- G- Place du Châtelet and the Fontaine de la Victoire

The Napoleonic 'zone' is highlighted in yellow.

Map II



Map of Rome c. 1800

The locations are highlighted in yellow to make them more visible against the dark backdrop.

- A- Trajan's Forum
- B- The Forum Romanum
- C- The Colosseum

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