Abstract: *From its outset in the 14th century, the poetics of ruin underwent a gradual mutation from nostalgic lamentation to romancing reverie. However, it was during the age of Enlightenment, and in the context of archaeological discoveries and picturesque voyages, that the perception of ruin acquired a more objective dimension. Nevertheless, the imaginative approach still persisted in the various representations of ruins, mainly through the medium of assemblage, displacement or distortion. These are, in fact, the strategies of capriccio, an artistic category which, although theoretically mistrusted, was quite in vogue during the age of Enlightenment. Even more interestingly, the caprice was not limited to painting, as it was introduced – in the form of the so-called fabrique – in the garden design as well, which, by that time, was largely considered as closely related to landscape painting itself. This text attempts to examine the ruin as an object/place meant to concentrate and display a complex set of meanings, pertaining to patrimony, history, time or destiny.*

Keywords: *ruin, capriccio, fabrique, landscape, garden design.*
Mots-clé: *ruine, capriccio, fabrique, paysage, jardinage.*

CAPRICCIO ALL'ANTICA. SHAPING THE RUIN IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT[1]

Cosmin Ungureanu

"Il faut ruiner un palais pour en faire un objet d'intérêt."
Denis Diderot, *Salon de 1767.*

A text written by Denis Diderot in 1767, on the occasion of the yearly *Salon*, contains a rather curious remark concerning one of Hubert Robert's paintings (*Grande Galerie éclairée du fond*): "The obscurity alone, the majesty of the edifice, the grandeur of the *fabrique*, the expanse, the tranquility, the silent resonance of the space would have made me tremble. I couldn't have restrained myself from dreamfully walking under that vault, from sitting between those columns, from entering your picture."[2] Apparently, the impulse of stepping into a metaphorical "beyond" of the painting is urged by a certain configuration of the landscape, as well as of

its architectural concretions. Moreover, Diderot seemed to be convinced that the very ability of "attracting"/"pushing" the beholder inside the picture, as the most suitable way of accessing the *poetical essence* of a ruin painting, was central for this sort of painterly rhetoric.[3]

The core of this aesthetic experience – in the Michael Fried's terms – consisted in absorption and theatricality. Even if an obvious literary effect, the fictitious passage into the image might be interpreted as an attempt to examine the artwork in a sensorial way, in which the visual knowledge was consolidated by presence, movement, or tactility. The theatricality, on the other hand, seems to be more important in the philosopher's reasoning, dealing not only with becoming an "actor" as a means of art criticism, but also with staging the painted reality.[4] In this respect, the archaeological site appears to be privileged, because of the spectacular potentiality of the architectural fragments. It is relevant, for instance, that an editorial enterprise such as Julien Le Roy's *Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece* (1758, 1770) – both in its narrative and in its

graphic recordings – considered the beholder (the author himself) as being simultaneously both "director" and "actor" when moving along and observing an archaeological site.[5] A similar analogy between architecture and theater may be found, two decades later, in the well known book of Le Camus de Mezieres.[6]

In Diderot's text, however, even more interesting than this sort of theatricality is the understanding of the image as a stupendous *Theatrum Mundi* that flows inescapably: "The ideas that the ruins stir up in my mind are grand. Everything is wiped out, everything perishes, everything fades away. Only the world remains. Only the time lasts. Oh, how old is this world! I step between two eternities. [...] What is my ephemeral existence when compared to this rock [...] to these suspended masses, swaying above me? I see the marble of the tombs turning into dust; […] A torrent carries the nations away, one on top of another, to the bottom of the same abyss; I, I alone claim to stop on the edge and split the flood which surrounds me!".[7] Unquestionably expressive, this thrilling meditation associates essential concepts – such as present versus historical time, or the place versus the universal space – into a vision already announcing romanticism. Within such an apocalyptic discourse, the fascination aroused by the ruins, for which Diderot conceives a genuine poetics, could be explained primarily through the lenses of the consequences triggered by the decay of both tectonics and space – such as shading off the boundaries between interior and exterior or between artificial and natural, as well as a dialectic connection between the genesis and the extinction of an edifice, or between the individual and collective destiny.[8]

It is altogether relevant that the re-evaluation of ruins during 1750-1770 is produced by the most favourable circumstances: archaeological discoveries and researches, picturesque exotic voyages, or even the increased autonomy of the ruin painting. However, the scientific or philosophical meditation on this topic is sustained by a large iconographical body which displays at least three main categories: the accurate representations, the architectural caprices and the anticipated ruins.

Yet, it would be also useful to notice that the definition provided by the 18th century for the term "ruin" includes both the collapsed building and the picture of it: "Ruins are the confused materials of substantial buildings that have been degraded by the time [...] Ruin *in painting* is the representation of almost entirely ruined buildings. Beautiful *ruins*. The term *ruin* is applied to painting that represents ruins."[9] Similarly, the term that Diderot repeatedly uses when referring to the architectural concretions in Hubert Robert's paintings, is "fabrique", is the same technical term used in the gardening treatises ("fabrique de jardin").

The expression *Ut pictura hortus* describes a complex historical reality, the development of which is based on the evolution of the "picturesque", as a concept imported from painting at the beginning of the 17th century and adapted to a wide range of description of nature, including the artificial landscapes ("jardin pittoresque").[10] For instance, the English park – which, during the last decades of the 18th century, irreversibly turned away the Cartesian geometry of the French gardens designed by André Le Nôtre – was often conceived as a sort of *in situ* version of the Italianate landscapes painted by Claude Lorrain or Gaspard Dughet.[11] Consequently, a significant correspondence is traceable between the (ruin) painted landscape and the garden design, in that both painting and gardening flourished during the second half of the 18th century, and an artist like "Robert des ruines" had occasion, more than once, to direct such aforementioned theatrical-metaphoric promenades both as painter and "dessinateur des jardins".

This dual image of ruin – *in visu* and *in situ* – seen as a correlative unit, makes the object of this text, in an attempt to investigate its theoretical, aesthetical, or scenographic involvements into the historical context – Paris and Rome of the last decades of the 18th century.

* * *

Antique Rome and *Modern Rome* (Figs. 1, 2) – two imaginary galleries overcrowded with paintings, statues and ancient fragments – are probably the best known artworks of Giovanni Paolo Panini, the most illustrious ruin painter in Rome during the first half of the 18th century. Evidently, they from a diptych – and are meaningful only as such – which was painted in no fewer than three versions.[12] The original pair was commissioned by Étienne-François de Choiseul, French ambassador between 1754 and 1765, to whom Hubert Robert owned his very Italian stay (1754-1765), as well as his introduction into the French Academy in Rome.[13] A fruitful professional kinship then grew between Hubert Robert and Panini, who was teaching perspectives at the French Academy by that time, one effect of which was the collaboration at the first pair of the imaginary galleries.[14]

In this diptych Panini resorts to the ingenious visual strategy of configuring a double illusion: an imaginary space containing a fictitious collection is constituted from various artifacts, ranging from the non-existent to the easily recognizable. Thus, inside the antique gallery, one may see famous artworks such as Laocoon, the Farnese Hercules, the Borghese Gladiator, or the Medici krater placed next to pseudo-paintings – self-referential quotations, apparently, though indistinguishable from the painter's real works – depicting, though, salient monuments like the Pantheon, the Coliseum, or the Temple of Fortuna Virilis. This type of painterly framing, which focuses upon the architectural object *in situ*, without placing it in a scenographic relationship with other monuments, typical of Piranesi, is unusual for Panini. It was a historical coincidence that in 1756, just about the time Panini was painting the first version of the *Antique Rome*, the four volumes of Piranesi's *Le Antichità romane* were published. Undoubtedly, its poignant illustrations (Fig. 3) must have been known both to Panini and to the Duke of Choiseul.[15] It is therefore possible that some visual suggestions – particularly the way of clustering ancient artifacts (Fig. 4) – might have been borrowed by Panini, unless the diptych itself was conceived as a response to Piranesi's work.

Yet, the spatial structure on which this antique iconography is grafted, hardly identifiable in the realm of contemporary architecture, is suggestive of a sacred building similar to Saint Peter cathedral, if not of the abstract scenery painted by Raphael in *The School of Athens*.[16] The beholder is thus induced to believe that the visual rendering of Rome as a metaphorical museum of Europe is at stake here, the vast patrimony of which – reduced to an assemblage of masterpieces – is installed inside a "temple of arts". In fact, Panini's thesis is part of a wider contemporary discourse which heralds – both in Italy and France – the establishment of the museum itself. In 1747, the French art reviewer Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne overtly called for opening a museum within the Louvre, and his advocacy supported the ephemeral existence of the Luxembourg museum (1750-1778), until the eventual fulfillment of his call, in 1793.[17]

Fig. 1 – Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Gallery of Views of Antique Rome*, 1755-56, oil on canvas, 186 x 227 cm, Stastsgalerie, Stuttgart.

Fig. 2 – Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Gallery of Views of Modern Rome*, oil on canvas, 1757, 170 x 245 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Fig. 3 – Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Le Antichità romane*, Roma, 1756, vol. I, title page.
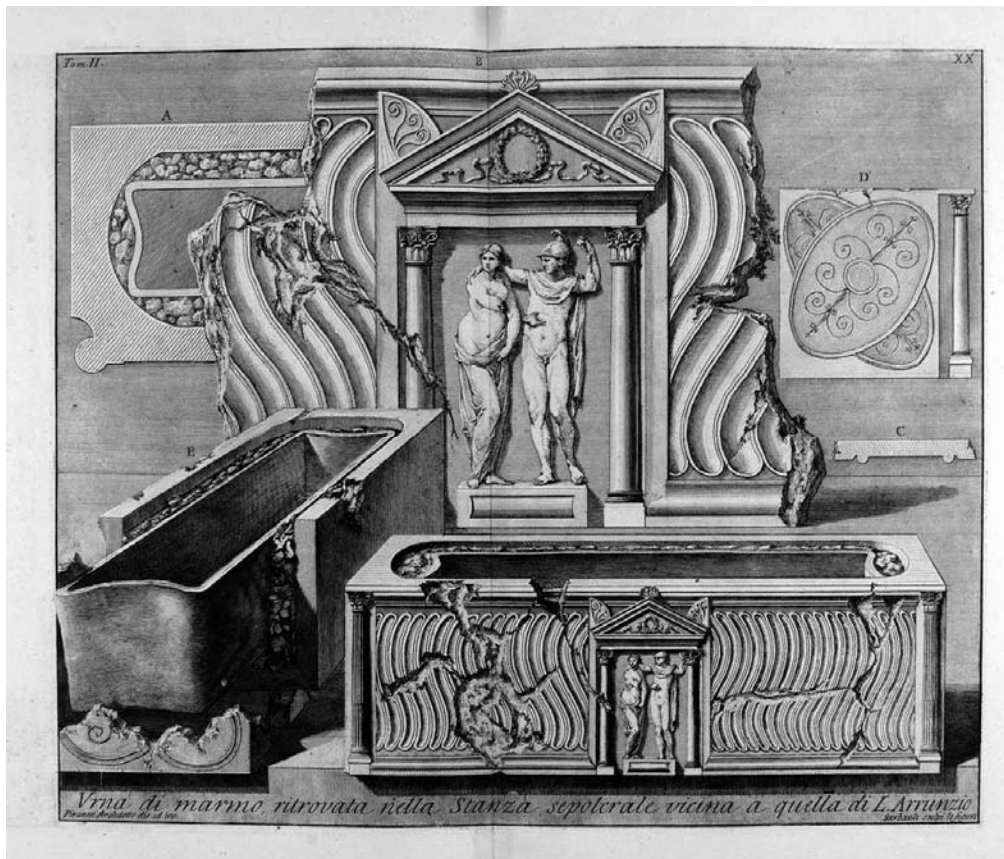

Fig. 4 – Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Le Antichità romane*, Roma, 1756, vol. II, Plate XX.

In the same years that he worked for the Duke of Choiseul (1755-57), Giovanni Paolo Panini was given the occasion further to explore the theme of the dual Rome, this time in an allegorical key: *The Decline of the Roman Empire* and *The Triumph of the Papacy* (Figs. 5-6). Once again, in this diptych, Antiquity is represented as a scenery montage, in which various iconic monuments and artifacts – the Coliseum, Constantine's Arch, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the Borghese krater, or the Belvedere torso – are crowded into a sort of "piazza". The meaning of this vestigial composition is given by two personages – the goddess Minerva (as a personification of Rome) and the allegory of Time. The pair in this painting appears to represent the Saint Peter cathedral *in situ*, together with an allegorical group personifying the Church.[18] Unlike the preceding case, which invoked themes of collection and patrimony, these two images explicitly approach the question of antique exemplarity: only when taking it into account – we are let to believe – can modernity triumph.[19] It is interesting to note that the two diptychs are complementary: the first one approaches the topic of space (the "temple of arts"), while the other is dealing with time and the historical value of the Roman monuments. However, both of them draw a connection between the antique heritage and the Church – either directly, through the allegory of it, or indirectly, by alluding to a sacred space.

The (comparative) juxtaposition of the two historical epochs seems to have been quite fashionable in Rome by the middle of the 18th century. An illustrative example is provided by the imposing ten-volume work – comprising 240 plates – entitled *Delle Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*, published by the Italian engraver and architect Giuseppe Vasi between 1747 and 1761. The French painter Jean Barbault, Piranesi's apprentice, similarly compiled a vast, two-volume corpus of engravings and explanatory texts – *Les plus beaux Monuments de Rome ancienne* and *Le plus beaux Edifices de Rome moderne* – in 1761

and 1763. Most probably, all of these publications – not to mention the works dedicated solely to the Latin Antiquity, such as Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura dei Romani* (1761) or Johann Winckelmann's *Monumenti antichi inediti* (1767) – constituted comprehensive source material for the Italian and French artists. Hubert Robert, for instance, certainly possessed Barbault's books, as well as numerous paintings by Panini, even including one version of the imaginary galleries.[20]

In fact, this dual perspective, abundantly rendered in texts and images during 1750-1770, is rooted into the 16th century, when it starts to develop as a sub-theme of Italy's mythification in Western Europe.[21] The exploratory impulse, one of the essential manifestations of the Northern Renaissance, was shaped into the experiences of voyage. Despite the rather ruinous circumstances which triggered the Italian "mythography" – the invasion of the French king Charles VIII and the military dispute between France and Spain – this contact allowed an overwhelming social diversity to circulate through Italy, gradually drawing and spreading the collective (legendized, exaggerated) representations of Italian culture and civilization.[22] Thus, invoking the famous Horation dictum "Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit" (*Epistulae*, II, 1, 156), one may assert that the myth of Italy was configured on the very ground of its political defeat – dialectically resuming the process of decay and restoration that is characteristic of Rome's cultural destiny.[23]

The first collective representations of Italy as otherness – as rather diffuse and lacking an intellectual purpose – generally belonged to the average social categories. However, the grounding of Italy's "cultural image" was symbolically marked by Michel de Montaigne's voyage, recorded in a *Journal de Voyage d'Italie*, written in 1580-81, though unpublished until 1774.[24] In this book, perhaps the most significant aspect is the picture of Rome as an emptied tomb, as well as a "[…] magnificent

Fig. 5 – Giovanni Paolo Panini, *The Coliseum and the Constantine Arch with Allegory of the Decadence of the Roman Empire*, 1757, oil on canvas, French private collection.

Fig. 6 – Giovanni Paolo Panini, *San Pietro with Allegory of the Triumph of Papacy*, 1757, oil on canvas, French private collection.

ancient text, razed and obliterated by the furious resentments of the barbarians".[25] Accordingly, in the dawn of classical modernity, the French writer set a sort of nostalgic perspective that would prove instrumental in the subsequent approach of the antique past. The complementary vision of Rome – intertwining the (restored) modern age and the (ruined) antique times – would be largely developed during the following two centuries. In this form, it is still revealed by Johan Wolfgang Goethe in his own journal (*Italienische Reise*, 1787), which amalgamates all the successive stages of the eternal city, yet into an intellectual, physical, even ethical experience which has nothing to do with the previous melancholic perspective.[26]

The sepulchral metaphor used by Montaigne inevitably triggers the association between ruin and tomb, with further connections to memory, commemoration, revival or regeneration. In this respect, one notices the extensive inclination, during the 18th century, towards picturing ruins that are accompanied by some vivid presence – either of an invading vegetation, or of gesturing personages – as if to mark the contrast between life and death, between the (modern) vitality and the (antique) lifelessness. Even if indirectly, these painterly artifices follow the same pattern of the juxtaposition between the antique and modern Rome. Perhaps the most appropriate examples are provided by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, whose engravings – especially those published under the title *Le Antichità romane* – are constantly meant to display the dual image of Rome. Unlike Panini, Piranesi points out the magnificence of the past, in sharp contrast to the decadent present.[27] Finally, there is another mode of juxtaposition between antique and modern – the famous *Querelle des anciens et des modernes*[28] – which is perceptible in the critical discourse as well as in the cognitive assimilation in architectural theory. At the middle of the 18th century, Jacques-François Blondel, the official voice of the Royal Academy of Architecture, recommended to his students a quite extensive bibliography, also including repertoires of ancient architecture, such as those published by Fischer von Erlach or Giovanni Battista Piranesi.[29]

By means of conclusion, the complex relationship between Antiquity and modernity, which reached its climax in the second half of the 18th century, is characterized by several more prominent aspects: firstly, the dual representation of Rome implies the evaluation of the past as a fundament for the present; secondly, classical antiquity is pictured as a sort of deposit, whose interchangeable elements are repeatedly reconfiguring its image, which gradually passes from a mythical approach – still obvious in Fischer von Erlach's work – to an archaeological one, even if the scientific re-evaluation is not entirely deprived of fantasy[30]; finally, a most important contribution to the visual codification of the classical Antiquity is due to the painterly enterprise of French and Italian artists – such as Jean Barbault, Hubert Robert or Jean-Nicolas Servan (Servandoni) – influenced by Panini and Piranesi.[31] Most often, their paintings belong to the stylistic category of the "caprice".

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The two temporal galleries (antique and modern) painted by Panini, the plausibility of which is consolidated by the insertion of recognizable characters and artifacts, only dissimulate their condition of "caprices". In fact, the goal assumed by such an image is precisely to pretend that it is plausible. A relevant example is provided, paradoxically, by the archaeological illustration. The sumptuous volume published by Julien David Le Roy in 1758, which was the result of an international rivalry, benefited, one year later, from an unauthorized British edition. Its author, a certain Robert Sayer, while attempting to compress the content of the book, ingeniously mingled the graphic recordings.

As a result, the monuments individually drawn by Le Roy, in their real context, were arbitrarily juxtaposed – the temple of Minerva appearing next to a fragment from Hadrian's aqueduct, the temple of Augustus next to the Erechtheion, and so forth (Figs. 7 – 10) – turning the supposedly scientific image into pure fantasy.[32]
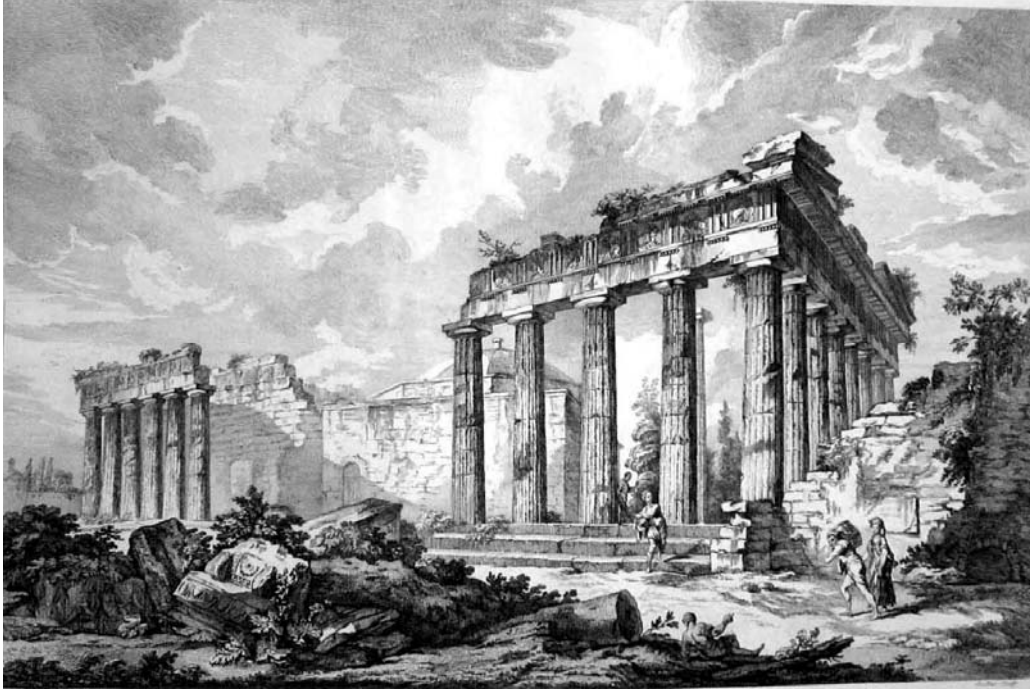

Fig. 7 – Julien David Le Roy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece*, Paris, 1758, *View of the Temple of Minerva in Athens*, engraving.
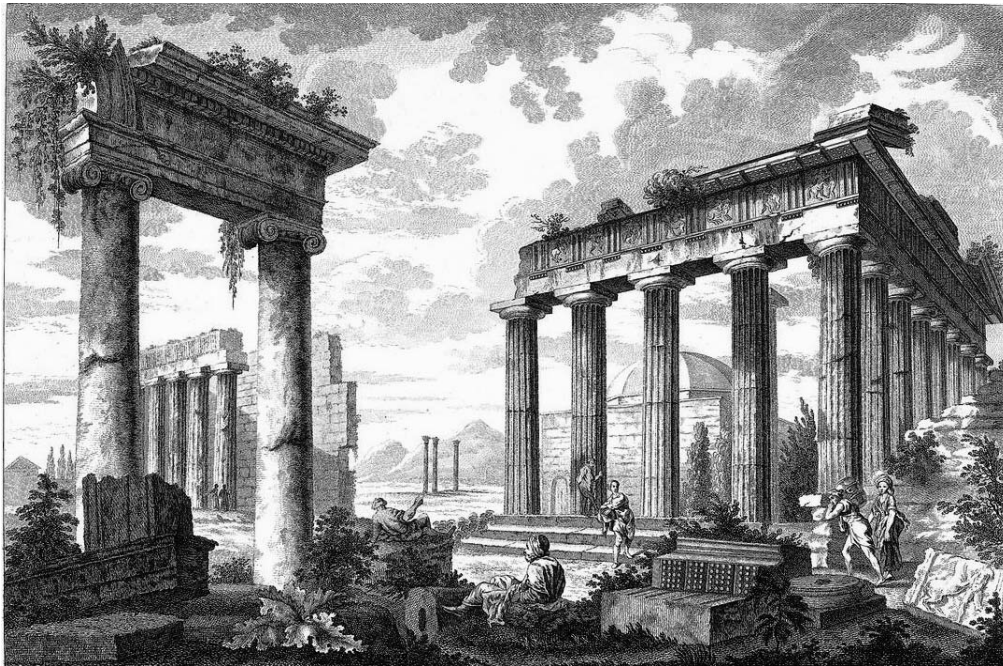

Fig. 8 – Robert Sayer, *Ruins of the Athens, with Remains and other Valuable Antiquities in Greece*, London, 1759, Plate. 3, *Hadrian's Aqueducte and Temple of Minerva*, engraving.

Fig. 9 – Julien David Le Roy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece*, Paris, 1758,
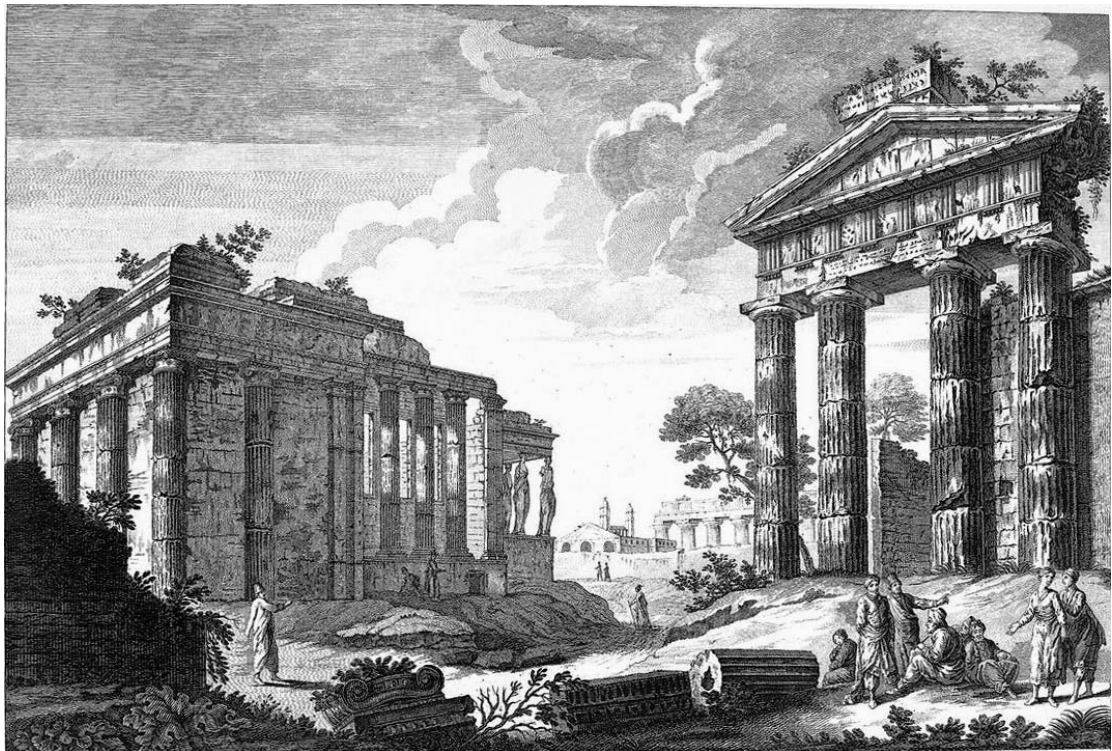*View of the Erechtheion in Athens*, engraving.

Fig. 10 – Robert Sayer, *Ruins of the Athens, with Remains and other Valuable Antiquities in Greece*,
London, 1759, Plate. 9, *Temple of Erichteus and Temple of Augustus*, engraving.

It was in painting, however, that the *capriccio* would flourish during the 18th century as a category of architectural landscape. As is evident from the definition given in 1720 by Charles d'Aviler[33] to the commentary made by Antoine Quatremère de Quincy[34] in 1788, the *capriccio* was theorized, paradoxically, as a species of excess, aberrancy or strangeness, not very distant from the initial meaning of the term, generated by the mannerist sensibility, which referred to monstrous or composite figures.[35] The transition from adjective (*capriccioso*) to noun (*capriccio*) occurred in the 17th century and, with the publication of Giovambattista Tiepolo's series of ten engravings suggestively entitled *Vari capricci*, was fully acknowledged as an independent artistic genre.[36]

The composite aspect of a painted *capriccio* – fundamental for its nature and status – merely envisaged the *spatial dimension*. Also characteristic of the 18th century, in contrast to previous times, was the perception of ruins as *temporal conglomerates*. In this case, the decayed, fragmentary architecture projects its meaning into the future, while continuing to evoke the lost glory of Antiquity. Moreover, besides past and future, the present was also included in the narrative strategies of the ruin – if we take into account the *built fabriques*, so characteristic for the 18th century garden design.[37] Among the most eloquent in this respect is the "Temple of philosophy" in Ermenonville, since it involves the meditation itself on time and meaning.

In May 1778, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, invited by such an enthusiastic admirer of his revolutionary theories as the Marquis of Girardin,[38] retired on the domain at Ermenonville, where he would spend the last weeks of his life. As an adept of the relatively new concept of "Landscape Park", he himself the author of a treatise published in 1777 under the title *De la composition des paysages*, the Marquis of Girardin would have, by that time, commissioned Hubert Robert (painter,

stage designer and soon to be "dessinateur des jardins du Roi"[39]) to design a picturesque garden following the British fashion. Among the various *fabriques des jardin* – an obelisk, a "tempietto" and others – there are two that are worthy of a closer attention: the so called "Temple of Philosophy" (Fig. 11) and the "Island of Poplars" (Fig. 12).

The temple is nothing else but a circular ruined edifice, built in rough stone, and surrounded by seven columns of which one fragmented. Each of the whole columns is named after a significant philosopher (Newton, Descartes, Voltaire, Rousseau, Penn şi Montesquieu), while the nameless, broken one is marked with the inscription "Quis hoc perficiet?" ("Who will complete this?").[40] Following the death of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the same artist was commissioned to create his cenotaph, on a nearby island. Consequently, Hubert Robert designed a pseudo-antique sarcophagus, encircled by poplars. Hence, Rousseau's grave was to be "antique" and "natural" at the same time, a picturesque combination of history and timelessness. After the fall of the Old Regime, the philosopher's remains were triumphantly transferred to the Pantheon built by Germain Soufflot in Paris. However, emptying of the tomb – a metaphorical sort of ruination – failed to prevent the "Island of Poplars" from becoming destination for pilgrimage.

The picturesque garden in Ermenonville is an excellent site to examine the complex relationship between space and temporality, between nature and artifice, as well as between (classical) completion and fragmentariness. At the same time, it is also relevant – towards the end of the century and after a long metamorphosis – in view of the new sensibility, whose manifestations are triggered by ruin.[41] Gradually established during the 18th century, this new type of receptiveness is characterized by the re-orientation from past to future. Thus, the reverie associated with the contemplation of an archaeological site or monument, is ultimately replaced by a sort of a vision of recovery.

Initially centred on the recreation of an ancient edifice starting from its fragmentary condition, as Piranesi's graphic attempts most suggestively exemplify, this type of prospective recovery would later be turned into the conceiving of non-existent ruins. Related to present, the past-future axis appears to be inverted: *the presentness of the edifice will, one day, have become its own (ideal) past.* Consequently, in the age of Enlightenment, the ruin is not conceived merely as pertaining to the past, but also as engaged with the future. Hence, it becomes a site of temporal fluctuation: past, present and future coexist within the same object.[42] This seems to be the theme of the famous painting *La Grande Galerie du Louvre en ruines* (Fig. 13), presented by Hubert Robert at the 1796 Salon. This temporal transience becomes even more significant when one acknowledges that the contemporary architecture (that of the 18th century) actually "contains" the antique one – by means of imitation – in an incomplete and de-structured form. In short, its appearance in an uncertain future closely resembles that in an immemorial past.

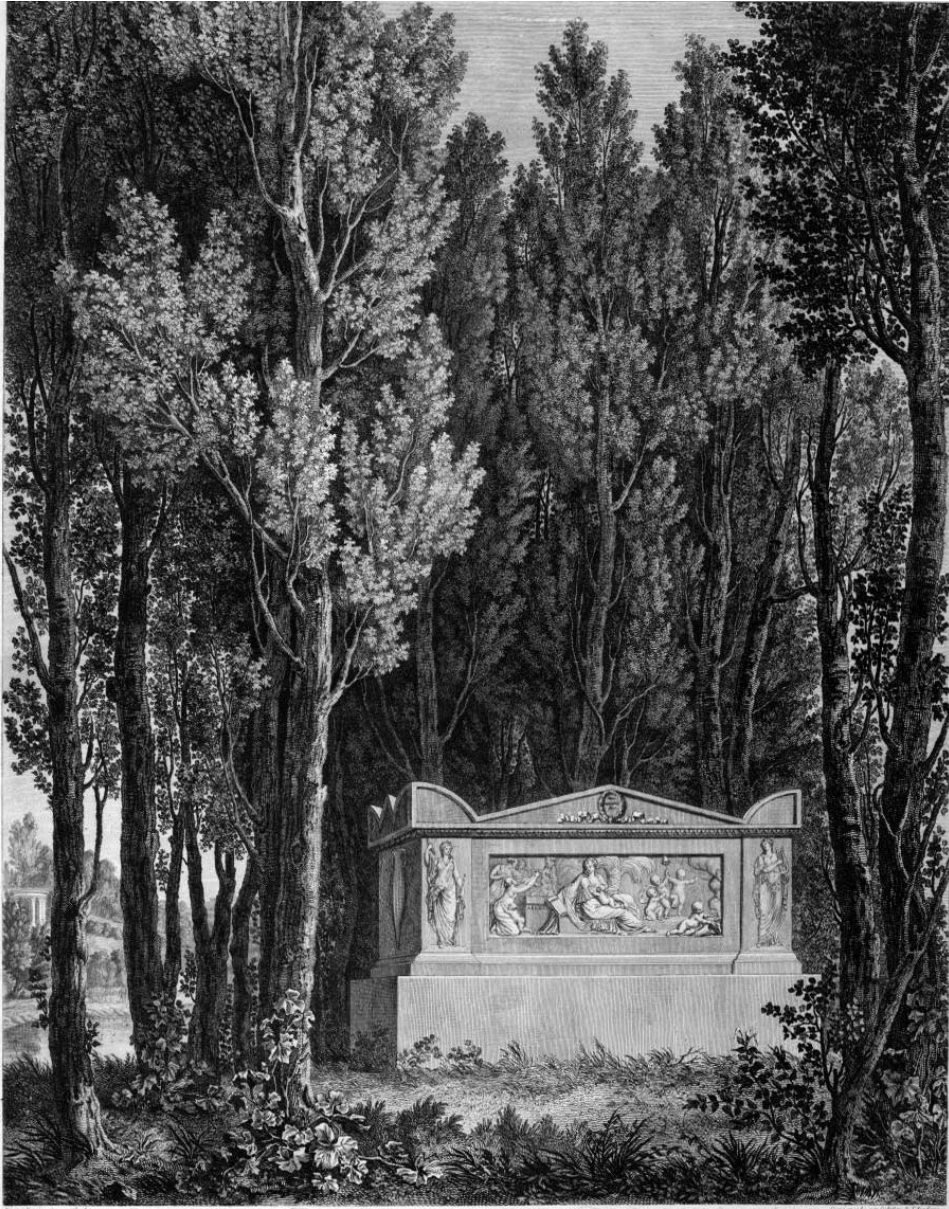Fig. 11 – Hubert Robert, *The Temple of Philosophy*, Ermenonville.

Fig. 12 – *The Island of Poplars at Ermenonville*, engraving by Godefroy Gandet.

In this complex discourse, the time plays a role of the utmost importance, since it reveals the essence: through erosion, it removes the superfluous "details", bringing to light only the essential architectural core. Likewise, as the "architect" is nature itself, there appears to be a curious symmetry within the relationship between nature and architecture: at some point in the past, nature must have expressed, in the view of primeval man, the fundamental principles of architecture[43] which, lost through the ages, are once again rediscovered. They are rediscovered, through the medium of nature, in the shape of the essential-ruin.

The making of a ruin is in itself a contradictory action, mainly because it suspends the building's history. Whatever might have been its fate – either a slow decay or a destructive impact – the ruin cannot be separated from that experience, or from the historicized emptiness whose carcass it is.[44] The decayed architecture is characterized, despite the historical

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Fig. 13 – Hubert Robert, *Imaginary View of the Grande Gallery of Louvre in Ruins*, 1796, oil on canvas, 114,5 x 146 cm, The Louvre.

duration of its matter, by the dialectical relation between disruption, loss, preservation and reconstitution. If the reconstruction of a ruin, even in the most imaginative manner, ultimately stands for the recovery of the historical emptiness, the *ab initio* making of a sort of scenery concretion, vaguely vestigial yet divested of the possibility of recreating its own destiny, is similar to a double discharge – of both the form and the meaning at the same time

At Ermenonville, this entire complexity is intertwined with philosophy and death, with the fragility of the system (the ruined temple) and with the removal of content – as reflected in both the fictive wholeness of the ruin and the emptied grave of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Both of the *fabriques* – the "Temple of Philosophy" and the "Island of Poplars" – reciprocally complete their semantic sphere. At the same time, they mirror one another: the emptied

sarcophagus, despite its physical (*all'antica*) completeness does not differ essentially from the ruined temple, while the circular row of trees may be seen as the vegetal duplicate of the stone colonnade[45], asserting the vital arborescence against the architectural degradation.

Here, the eternal dispute between nature and architecture is apparently settled in favour of the former; the spectacle of an empty tomb surrounded by trees symbolically stands for the "back to nature" thesis. At the same time, the "Temple of Philosophy" – an inspired metaphor for the architectonics of reasoning – puts forward a paradoxical problem: the failure of philosophy and, at the same time, the latency of its accomplishment ("Quis hoc perficiet?"). Ultimately, what is at stake here seems to be the dissolution of the classical theory – caused by the sextet of modern philosophers – and the triumph of subjectivity.[46]

[1] This article was written in May 2012, at Werner Oechslin Foundation in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, the deposit of the most astonishing bibliographical resources. The access to this institution was generously supported by New Europe College in Bucharest.

[2] "L'obscurité seule, la majesté de l'édifice, la grandeur de la fabrique, l'étendue, la tranquillité, le retentissement sourd de l'espace m'aurait fait frémir. Je n'aurais jamais pu me défendre d'aller rêver sous cette voûte, de m'asseoir entre ces colonnes, d'entrer dans votre tableau. Mais il y a trop d'importuns. Je m'arrête. Je regarde. J'admire et je passe." Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, Tome Onzième, Garnier, 1876, p. 229.

[3] Michael Fried, *La place de spectateur. Esthétique et origines de la peinture moderne*, Gallimard 1990, p. 129. Hubert Robert fails to keep him "inside" the painting because he hasn't assimilated the poetics of ruins: „Monsieur Robert, vous ne savez pas pourquoi les ruine font tant de plaisir, indépendament de la variété des accidents qu'elles montrent; et je vais vous en dire ce qui m'en viendra sur-le-champ." Denis Diderot, *ibidem.*

[4] Concerning the relationship between painting and theater, largely theorized by Diderot as ranging from the fictitious disappearance of the audience to that of evacuating the pictorial space, see Michel Fried, *op. cit., passim.*

[5] From the very beginning Julien David Le Roy assures the reader that he will be protected from monotony, as the dry descriptions will be from time to time interrupted either by occasional reflections, or by digressions concerning the voyage itself or the special features of a specific place. *Confer* Julien David Le Roy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece*, Paris, 1758, p. vij.

[6] „Chaque piece doit avoir son caractere particulier. L'analogie, le rapport des proportions decident nos sensations; une piece fait désirer l'autre, cette agitation occupe & tient en suspens les esprits, c'est un genre de jouissance qui satisfait." Nicolas Le Camus de Mezieres, *Le génie de l'architecture ou l'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations*, Paris, 1780, p. 45. See also Sigrid de Jong, *Staging Ruins: Paestum and Theatricality*, in Caroline van Eck & Stijn Bussels (Eds.), *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 140-141.

[7] „Les idées que les ruines réveillent en moi sont grandes. Tout s'anéantit, tout périt, tout passe. Il n'y a que le monde qui reste. Il n'y a que le temps qui dure. Qu'il est vieux ce monde! Je marche entre deux éternités. De quelque part que je jette les yeux, les objets qui m'entourent m'annoncent une fin et me résignent à celle qui m'attend. Qu'est-ce que mon existence éphémère, en comparaison de celle de ce rocher qui s'affaisse, de ce vallon qui se creuse, de cette forêt qui chancelle, de ces masses suspendues au-dessus de ma tête et qui s'èbranlent? Je vois le marbre des tombeaux tomber en poussière; et je ne veux pas mourir! [...] Un torrent entraîne les nations les unes sur les autres au fond d'un abîme commun; moi, moi seul, je prétends m'arrêter sur le bord et fendre le flot qui coule à mes côtés!" Denis Diderot, *op. cit.*, p. 229-230.

[8] For Diderot's poetics see Roland Mortier, *La poétique des ruines en France. Ses origines, ses variations de la Renaissance à Victor Hugo*, Genève, 1974, p. 88-106. As for the philosophical implications of the topic of ruins during the 18th century, see Philippe Junod, *Ruines anticipées. Ou l'histoire au future antérieur*, in *Chemins de traverse. Essai sur l'histoire des arts*, Éditions Infolio, 2007, p. 382 and Jeannot Simmen, *Ruinen-Faszination in der Graphik vom 16. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Dortmund, 1980, p. 9-10.

[9] „RUINES, s. f. pl. (Archit.) ce sont des matériaux confus de bâtimens considérables dépéris par succession de tems. Telles sont les *ruines* de la tour de Babel, ou tombeau de Belus, à deux journées de Bagdat en Syrie, sur les bords de l'Euphrate, qui ne sont plus qu'un monceau de briques cuites & crues maçonnées avec du bitume, & dont on ne reconnoît que le plan, qui étoit quarré. [...] RUINE, se dit *en Peinture* de la représentation d'édifices presque entierement ruinés. De belles *ruines*. On donne le nom de *ruine* au tableau même qui représente ces *ruines*. *Ruine* ne se dit que des palais, des tombeaux somptueux ou des monumens publics. On ne diroit point *ruine* en parlant d'une maison particuliere de paysans ou bourgeois ; on diroit alors *bâtimens ruinés*." See *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, Par une Société de Gens de Lettres, Tome Quatorzieme, À Neufchatel, 1765, p. 433. This definition confirms the transformation of ruin's status during the 18th century. See Michel Makarius, *Ruins,* Paris, 2005, p. 81.

[10] On the development of the notion of "picturesque" both in painting and in other related domains, see Wil Munsters, *La poétique du pittoresque en France de 1700 à 1830*, Genève, 1991. p. 21-80.

[11] Michel Makarius, *op. cit.*, p. 125. Concerning the relationship between the painted and the designed landscape see Bram van Oostveldt, Ut pictura hortus/ut theatrum hortus: *Theatricality and French Picturesque Garden Theory (1771-95)*, in Caroline van Eck & Stijn Bussels (Eds.), *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 165-167 and Alain Roger, *Court traité du paysage*, nrf Gallimard, 1995, p. 38-39. Essentially, according to Alain Roger, the two realms of landscape design – *in visu* and *in situ* – are complemetary, both of them working, with their own means, upon the same matter determined by the active relationship between nature and culture. Cf. *Idem*, p. 16-19.

[12] The original pair is nowadays distributed in two locations: Staatsgalerie in Stutgart (*Antique Rome*, 1755-56) and Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (*Modern Rome*, 1757). The second diptych, commissioned by the same patron, is kept within the metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Finally,

the last pair, visibly larger in size, painted in 1758-59 for the Duke of Canillac, can be seen in the Louvre. See David R. Marshall, *Giovanni Paolo Pannini: Roma antica and Roma moderna* (catalogue entries), in Henry A. Millon (Ed.), *The Triumph of Baroque. Architecture in Europe 1600–1750*, Thames & Hudson, 1999, p. 426.

[13] See Georges Bernier, *Hubert Robert. The Pleasure of Ruines*, New York, 1988, p. 6, and Jean de Cayeux, *Hubert Robert*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989, p. 29-30.

[14] Victor I. Stoichita, *Museum und Ruine. Museum als Ruine*, in Reto Sorg & Stefano Bodo Würffel (Hrsg.), *Totalität und Zerfall im Kunstwerk der Moderne*, München, 2006, p. 78. Among the characters of the first diptych, one can recognize both painters: Gianpaolo Panini, scrutinizing the beholder with his brushes and palette in hand, is placed inside the antique gallery, while Hubert Robert, holding a drawing map, is visible inside the modern one. This distribution was interpreted in terms of artistic mediation – between ancient and modern, between master and apprentice. See Jean de Cayeux, *op. cit.*, p. 39 and David R. Marshall, *idem.*

[15] „Non può essere contestato il fatto che le 'Antichità romane' pubblicate nel 1756, devono essere piaciute al Panini [...]." Cf. Ferdinando Arisi, *Gian Paolo Panini e i fasti della Roma del '700*, Roma, 1986, p. 172.

[16] About the spatial configuration of these galleries, seen through the lens of contemporary architecture, see David R. Marshall, *The Ideal and Theatrical Gallery: Giovanni Paolo Panini's Paintings of Imaginary Galleries*, in Ch. Strunck & E. Kieven (Hrsg.), *Europäische Galeriebauten. Galleries in a Comparative European Perspective (1400-1800)*, München, 2010, *passim*, and Victor I. Stoichita, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[17] *Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état de la peinture en France*: „[…] choisir dans le palais du Louvre un lieu propre pour placer à demeure les chefs-d'oeuvre des plus grands maîtres de l'Europe [...]"*apud* Victor I. Stoichita, *op. cit.*, p. 74. See also Edouard Pommier, *La naissance des musées*, in Thomas W. Gaehtgens & Krzysztof Pomian (Eds.), *Le XVIII*^e *siècle*, 1998, p. 99.

[18] The two artworks were painted for d'Harcourt collection. See Ferdinando Arisi, *op. cit.*, p. 171-172.

[19] Michael Kiene, *"Redende Capricci" von Giovanni Paolo Pannini: Studien zur Zitatmontage im 18. Jahrhundert*, in Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte, 57, Bd., H. 3, 1994, *passim*; Michael Kiene, *Das Architekturcapriccio in Bild und Architekturtheorie*, in Ekkehard Mai (Hrsg.), *Das Capriccio als Kunstprinzip. Zur Vorgeschichte der Moderne*, Skira, 1996. p. 91-92.

[20] Jean de Cayeux, *op. cit.*, p. 74 and Nina L. Dubin, *Futures and Ruins. Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert*, Los Angeles, 2010, p. 118 and note 33, p. 146.

[21] Cesare de Seta, *Il mito dell' Italia e altri miti*, Torino, 2005, p. vii and p. 3-55.

[22] "[...] ed è questa *oral history* a costruire i miti colectivi che poi si consolidano e si formalizzano nelle culture dei loro rispettivi Paesi", *Idem*, p. 7.

[23] Marc Fumaroli, *Rome dans la mémoire et l'imagination de l'Europe*, Unione internazionale degli istituti di archeologia, 1997, p. 35. The author discusses the poignant contrast between *Roma aeterna* (at the same time the "New Athens", the "New Troy", the "New Gerusalem") and the commonly perceived Rome (ruined, sacked and desecrated, the "New Babylon").

[24] " [...] un termine esenziale per la formazione del mito dell'Italia in Francia nell'ultimo ventennio del Cinquecento è senza alcun dubbio il celebre *Voyage* di Monsieur de Montaigne [...]" Cf. Cesare de Seta, *op. cit.*, p. 36. The belated issuance of this book may also be regarded as an attestation of the importance of personal experience in the textual recordings of the Italian voyage. See Gilles Bertrand, *Le Grand Tour revisité. Pour une archéologie du tourisme: le voyage des français en Italie, milieu XVIII*^e*siècle – début XIX*^e*siècle*, École français de Rome, 2008, p. 8.

[25] Marc Fumaroli, *op. cit.*, p. 39-40. „[…] car les ruines d'une si espouvantable machine rapporteroint plus d'honneur & de reverence à sa mémoire; ce n'estoit rien que son sepulcre. Le monde ennemi de sa longue domination, avoit premierement brisé & fracassé toutes les pieces de ce corps admirable, & parce qu'encore tout mort, ranversé, & desfiguré, il lui faisoit horreur, il en avoit enseveli la ruine meme." Michel de Montaigne, *Journal du Voyage en Italie, Par la Suisse & l'Allemagne en 1580 & 1581*, Rome, 1774, tome second, p. 115-116.

[26] Marc Fumaroli, *op. cit.*, p. 40-41.

[27] About the different aspects of Piranesi's double meaning in the representation of ruins, see Richard Wendorf, *Piranesi's Double Ruin*, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2001, *passim* and especially p. 162-163.

[28] See, among others, Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory. A Historical Survey, 1673-1968*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 6-9.

[29] „Tel est, Messieurs, le projet que nous avons formé [...] afin d'éloigner s'il est possible, par la connoissance des meilleurs Auteurs & l'exemple des plus célèbres monuments, la frivolité qui paroît l'emporter sur les beautés mâles & simples de l'Architecture [...] L'*Architecture historique de Fischer, in-fol.*; ouvrage estimé pour la collection des plus célébres monuments de l'Egypte, de la Grece & de l'Italie [...] Les *Oeuvres de J. B. Piranese*, remplies de productions fertiles & abondantes, & d'une très-belle exécution." Cf. Jean-François Blondel, *Discours sur la nécessité de l'étude de l'architecture*, Paris, 1754, p. 82-89. See also Werner Oechslin, *Architectura est scientia aedificandi: Reflections on the Scope of Architectural and Architectural-Theoretical Literature*, in Henry A.

Millon (Ed.), *The Triumph of Baroque. Architecture in Europe 1600–1750*, Thames & Hudson, 1999, p. 208.

[30] Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurff, einer historischen Architectur*, Wien, 1721. About the connection between archaeology and imagination, see Peter N. Miller, *Piranesi and the Antiquarian Imagination*, in Sarah E. Lawrence (Ed.), *Piranesi as Designer*, Smithsonian Institution, 2007, *passim*.

[31] Regarding the activity of the French painters in Rome, in the ambiance of Panini and Piranesi, see Michael Kiene, *Pannini. Les dossiers du musée du Louvre*, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992, p. 87-96, as well as Marianne Roland-Michel, *De l'illusion à «l'inquiétante étrangeté»: quelques remarques sur l'évolution du sentiment et de la répresentation de la ruine chez des artistes français à partir de 1730*, in Georges Brunel (Ed.), *Piranèse et les français*, Roma, 1978, *passim*.

[32] Julien David Le Roy, *op.cit.*, *passim* and Robert Sayer, *Ruins of the Athens, with Remains and other Valuable Antiquities in Greece*, London, 1759. See also Irini Apostolou, *L'Orientalisme des voyageurs français au XVIIIème siècle: une iconographie de l'Orient méditerranéen*, Presse de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009, p. 112.

[33] „CAPRICE. On apelle ainsi toute composition hors des regles ordinaries de l'Architecture, & d'un goût singulier & nouveau, comme sont les ouvrages du Cavalier *Boromini* & de quelques autres Architectes qui ont affecté de se distinguer." Augustin-Charles d'Aviler, *Explication des Termes d'Architecture, qui comprend l'Architecture, les Mathematiques, la Geometrie, la Mecanique, l'Hydraulique, le Dessein, la Peinture, la Sculpture, les Mesures, les Instrumes, la Coûtume, & c*, Paris, 1720, p. 447.

[34] "En architecture on apelle *caprice* toute invention, toute forme sans necessité que la nature n'a point suggerée, que ne sauroit justifier le besoin, ou que la convenance désavoue." Quatremère de Quincy, *Encyclopedie Méthodique. Architecture*, Paris, 1788, p. 466.

[35] The adjective "capriccioso" was used by Giorgio Vasari in a wide sense, varying from "ridiculous" to "bizarre", while Filippo Baldinucci considered the "caprice" as a sort of "invention": "Capriccio. Proprio pensiero e invenzione. Quindi, fatto a capriccio o di fantasia, cioè di proprio pensiero e invenzione. E dicesi anche capriccio talvolta alla cosa stessa fatta, cioè questo, o pittura, o scultura, o altro che sia, e un mio capriccio." Cf. Filipp Baldinuci, *Vocabolario toscano dell'Arte del Disegno*, In Firenze, 1681, p. 28.

[36] Michel Makarius, *op. cit.*, p. 67-72.

[37] The first reference to such a *fabrique* was given, in the third decade of the 18th century, by Batty Langley: "[…] Views of *the Ruins of Buildings*, after the old *Roman manner* […] which *Ruins* may either be *painted upon Canvas*, or actually built in that Manner with *Brick*, and *cover'd with Plaistering* in Imitation of Stone." Batty Langley, *New Principles of Gardening: Or, The Laying out and Planting Parterres, Groves, Wildernesses, Labyrinths, Avenues, Parks & c. After a more Grand and Rural Manner than has been done before*, London, 1728, p. xv. See also Paul Zucker, *Fascination of Decay. Ruins: Relic-Symbol-Ornament*, New Jersey, 1968, p. 196 and Michel Makarius, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

[38] Hans Dieter Schaal, *Ruinen. Reflexionen über Gewalt, Chaos und Verganänglichkeit*, Stuttgart, 2011, p. 44. Rousseau's ideas, concerning the "state of nature" and the origins of mankind, are said to have contributed to the outburst of the French Revolution. See Gordon H. McNeil, *The Cult of Rousseau and the French Revolution*, in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 6, No. 2, April 1945, *passim*.

[39] Philippe Junod, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

[40] Hans Dieter Schaal, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Nina L. Dubin, *op. cit.*, p. 24-27. We cannot but observe that, paradoxically, the modern episteme is built through ruination.

[41] Roland Mortier, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[42] Nina L. Dubin, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

[43] That was the theory of the abbot Marc-Antoine Laugier, notorious for returning to the issue of the "primitive hut", which speculated, in fact, on a Vitruvian *topos* about the primeval humans copying natural forms and processes in their first dwellings. Laugier gave a touching narrative about the difficulties the primitive man had to face when trying to find a shelter. Drifting from place to place, he finally stopped in a forest where, while contemplating nature, he discovered the basic architectural principles. Cf. Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture*, Paris, 1755, p. 9-10.

[44] Sophie Lacroix, *Ruine*, Paris, 2008, p. 28.

[45] *Mutatis mutandis,* the "Island of Poplars" appears to be a sort of vegetal temple (perhaps a modern Stonehenge), deliberately conceived for a "priest of nature's cult" such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. See Hans Dieter Schaal, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[46] This idea was first formulated by Ernst Cassirer. See Nina L. Dubin, *op. cit.*, p. 27.