Constructs of Power: Picturing Architectural Iconoclasm in

Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1799

The Pont au Change, the de-facto money exchange market of Paris since the late 1640s, appears empty of the shops and stalls that had given it its name in Hubert Robert's eponymous painting of 1789 (FIG 1).[1] Robert's dramatized clearing of the bridge has reduced the former edifices to hulking heaps of white rubble. The rubble threatens to become as sculptural, as material, as the built structures dominating the background of the work: the Conciergerie and the spire of the Sainte Chapelle. These last two structures stand in for the power of the instigators of these centrally planned demolitions, the city of Paris and the Crown; the demolitions were the result of a 1786 royal edict aimed at increasing circulation within a city deemed by urban planning officials to be too congested and insalubrious.[2] The Conciergerie in 1789 served both as a prison and the administrative and judicial center of the kingdom. Robert painted the Conciergerie larger than linear perspective would have dictated, emphasizing the unilateral nature of the royal control exerted from the building over Parisian public space.[3] The demolitions of the bridge's houses are represented by Robert not in terms of the circulatory benefit acquired—for meaningful circulation is nearly impossible amidst a disorientingly white sea of rubble—but as part of a royal campaign to increase the monumentality of local, recognizable centers of power. Reinforcing this campaign, well-dressed individuals at windows or on balconies of the Conciergerie look down on the activity of the workers and the materiality of the rubble from their privileged height.

The image chronicles, in its orthogonals, the beneficiaries and victims of the demolitions. The top-down administrative decision to "cleanse" the bridge through destruction of local commerce (even if the citizens were compensated—not enough, they argued—for it[4]) left local livelihoods in disarray; a seemingly confused woman, possibly a

laundress who used the river to ply her trade, speaks with a soldier surveying the process of destruction at the center foreground, as if to ask directions.

The Pont au Change demolitions were not the result of spontaneous iconoclastic demonstrations, but rather centrally planned urban improvements— like the building of St. Geneviève (begun in 1758) and the clearing of the Louvre's courtyard (begun in 1756). Indeed, Robert's *Pont au Change* shares the visual tropes of contemporary topographical paintings of Ancien Regime Paris that address edifice construction, planned demolition, and destruction (by fire, primarily). Such views were predominantly painted by Robert and his contemporaries, Pierre Antoine Demachy and Etienne Jeaurat.[5] These artists all use a similar vocabulary in their Parisian views, including contrasting rubble with built architecture, foregrounding piles of hefty stones, and placing anecdotal figures into new relationships with others and the space around them.[6] The violence being done to architecture in demolition or destruction views is often de-intensified by these recognizable tropes. For example, the image of an urban fire becomes mostly about the drama of the blaze and the strange shape of the ruin left behind than the gruesome spectacle of lives lost.[7]

Robert's *The Bastille in the Early Days of its Destruction* (1789) has often been categorized by art historians as another version of a "demolition" painting (FIG 2).[8] Shown alongside one of the two versions of Robert's *Demolition of the Houses on the Pont au Change* in the Salon of 1789, The *Bastille* nevertheless represents architectural iconoclasm, rather than planned destruction. Both paintings use the vocabulary of labor and rubble to emphasize materiality in opposing ways. In the *Pont au Change*, the labor of clearing, visualized in the white mounds that frame the painting on either side, reinforces the plunging orthogonal of the bridge that ultimately accentuates the buildings associated with authority. In the *Bastille,* the rubble is instead marginalized even as it is foregrounded: as a pit of white stone forming a ring around the diminishing fortress in place of a moat. According to an

eyewitness account, this is more or less how the demolition was pursued: "... all the other parts of the Bastille, as fast as they were pulled down, [were] thrown into the ditch which surrounded it."[9] Though the rubble does not signify the intensity of labor here, the sheer number of workers does: both those in the foreground wearing Revolutionary cockades and using wheelbarrows to clear the debris, and those visible at the top of the edifice, demolishing it. The depicted enthusiasm of the workers was also described by Calet, a former prisoner of the Bastille: " … so great was the number of people, and such was their eagerness to [work] that had the prison been ten times as large, it would have been taken down in as short a time."[10] The alignment of Robert's painting with this description does not make it illustrative per se of contemporary events, but both the visual and written descriptions point to a collective willingness to believe that the Bastille was so imbibed with tyranny it could only be destroyed—and quickly.

Most contemporary imagery of spontaneous destruction, such as various representations of the 1772 fire at the Parisian hospital of the Hotel Dieu by Robert, Gabriel de Saint Aubin and others, include dramatic lighting, overly precise architectural details, ruins, and little vignettes of action by people who may or may not have been at the site painted in to show how tragedy shapes human interaction (FIG 3).[11] The dramatic lighting in Robert's *Bastille* is due to the clouds of smoke rising from the right side of the fortress, representing the fires still smoldering from the popular incineration of buildings of the inner courtyard of the fortress. The smoke seems to take over all of the painting's background, as if the entire city of Paris were burning in the wake of this strange and immediate demolition. The image's attention to the materiality of individual stones in the fortress wall competes with that given to the billowing clouds of smoke. The building is becoming a ruin but is strangely depicted as nearly whole.[12] The bystanders interact with one another in little, barely visible

vignettes, pointing and cheering on the workers. In all this, the image mostly fits its in with standard destruction imagery.

Yet there are some notable exceptions. In Robert' *Bastille,* far more workmen are engaged far more assiduously at a pace that far outstrips any activity of the workmen in the *Pont au Change* or in demolition imagery in general. Labor here does not reinforce royal signage; rather the workers dominate the old royal building both physically and through the intensity of their activity. The spectators of the destruction—some women and children—are placed below the fortress as opposed to those observing the worksite from above in the *Pont au Change;* the privilege of looking down from a great height is that of the laborers alone. The clearing of the Bastille for Robert takes on opposing meanings of power and class as that in the *Pont au Change*; royally sanctioned demolition of popular edifices gives way to popular-sanctioned destruction of royal edifices.

Robert 's sculptural painting of the smoke, positioning of the looming fortress, and intensity of dark-to-light contrasts in the image also point to another difference from traditional 'destruction' iconography. The very stones themselves seem to have something devilish about them. Indeed, pre-Revolutionary prints of the Bastille showed Devils flitting around it and called it the "hell of the living."[13] The wholeness of the Bastille in Robert's image—it is much more intact than the houses of the *Pont au Change*—is in part a testament to this; its capture by the people of Paris was as monumental as the building itself for both the momentum and the iconography of the Revolution. A little-known review of the Salon of 1789 points out these tensions between the standardized destruction iconography in which Robert's image participates and the way in which the taking of the Bastille should have been represented; evidently the review authors did not fully understand Robert's subtle changes to these tropes. In *Les Eleves au Salon ou l'Amphigouri* (1789), it is noted that Robert should have been more "severe" in his view of the Bastille: "he could have created a sensation of

fright, rather than making the incident into an agreeable painting."[14] While political bent of

this comment could be taken in multiple directions, it nevertheless speaks to the fear felt by

people of Paris, especially those in the nearby faubourg, at the prospect of living so close to

an armed bastion of royal depravity in a period when the monarchy seemed, at best,

untrustworthy.[15] The anonymous reviewers seem to be making the point that Robert's usual

"agreeable" style, with which they also characterize his other paintings, is not appropriate for

a depiction of architectural iconoclasm. Demolition imagery shows wealth at work, the

powerful classes intervening in the Parisian cityscape to suit their ends. Iconoclastic

architectural destruction, however, involves a hard-fought victory over the corrupted space of

wealth and privilege by previously oppressed populations; the victims of urban reforms find

themselves now capable of instigating it.

     The Bastille and the Custom Houses of Paris (hereafter referred to as the *Barrières*)

are the only major Parisian buildings to have suffered deliberate architectural iconoclasm— to

have been attacked and torn down for political reasons alone, relatively spontaneously, by the

population of Paris. These incidents occurred historically within a few days of one another,

from July 11 to 14, 1789. Only the Bastille, however, was reduced to rubble in permanence;

the *Barrières* were mostly subsequently rebuilt (even though they were to lose their function

of collecting tariffs on goods entering into Paris in 1791) and feature in future parts of the

Revolutionary story.[16] Though destruction and creation are meant to go hand in hand in

Revolutionary politics, the period was not one in which topographical construction imagery

flourished. This may be due to the fact that no new public buildings projects were begun in

Revolutionary Paris; radical politics did not bring about an attendant radical architectural

style.[17] The historian Jules Michelet famously commented: "whereas the empire has its

column and the monarchy the Louvre, the Revolution has as its monument… a void."[18] In

other words, nothing new was made from the ground up to replace the old: instead, old

buildings were repurposed to new uses. Under the supervision of Quatremère de Quincy, the church of Sainte Geneviève was altered and repurposed as the Pantheon to Great Men, consecrated by the transfer of Voltaire's body in 1790.[19] The Louvre began its conversion in this period from an abandoned royal palace to a public museum, while its Salle du Manège was converted into a meeting hall for the National Assembly.[20]

The images featuring Parisian public buildings created from 1789-1799 align with contemporary Revolutionary architectural practices, such as the vogue for repurposing Ancien Regime buildings. However, in framing scenes of political upheaval with age-old markers of space in Paris, these images bestow upon public architecture a permanence and continuity of form that the temporary architectural fantasies of Revolutionary festivals and of contemporary architectural *Concours* briefs expressly challenged. In these new, politically charged topographical images, however, key public buildings, even those that had iconoclasm enacted upon them, remained upholders of the status quo. Public architecture, that is, remained complicit with the ruling power; images of that architecture can reveal when and how the ruling power changed by representing an extant building in new ways, with new occupants.

Traditional places of popular power and activity, like the Place de Grève in front of the Hotel de Ville or the Parvis of Notre Dame, did not have their adjacent buildings torn down (though Notre Dame suffered from iconoclastic activity in its decoration). Both buildings were repurposed for new mayors and new deities.[21] The Bastille and the *Barrières*, however, were forbidden spaces to Parisian non-elites, spaces of secrecy, of wealth, and of the abuse of power. This meaning was written directly into the architecture of these buildings, not just their decoration; their form and their function were allied in the Parisian psyche. Images of the iconoclastic assault on the Bastille and the *Barrières* reveal the particular classed nature of these buildings and the spaces around them. Most of the images were created just after the events depicted, but all were made within three years of 1789; as such they document the

prevailing political attitude surrounding the accessibility of urban spaces and the nature of certain types of Ancien Regime architecture. These images also speak to the social conditions under which repurposing of a space could exist and imagine topographical details or anecdotal heroics occurring in that space to underline its shifting social and political meaning.

The Bastille's Destruction

Many depictions of the Bastille stress its monumentality. In Robert's image, the workers doing the demolitions job almost seem to visually "replace" the crenellations of the fortress even as they tear it down, stone by stone. This visual strategy emphasizes the Bastille's massiveness and wholeness; it denies the building status as a romantic ruin. Scholarship has so far focused primarily on the material form that representations of the Bastille's wholeness took – in statues of the edifice made from its rubble by the man who organized its demolition, Pierre-François Palloy.[22] Prints or paintings that depict the building whole have received scant attention as a group, despite the fact that they represent the overwhelming majority of extant two-dimensional imagery depicting the events of July 14. Even in images where the Bastille is shown during or after its destruction, its materiality is still stressed: in the largeness of the piles of rubble, or, after it has been completely dismantled, in an illuminated ground plan for a fête thrown by Palloy, with a tall pole placed in its former center to mark its former height.[23] This kind of subsequent re-materializing of the Bastille emphasizes what many of the images of its storming show: the difficulty of attacking the building, and therefore the extreme bravery of the Parisians in attacking it. The continual making of commemorative images showing the Bastille whole after demolitions had already begun reinforces the idea of its wholeness in the French psyche, as well as helping to locate the image in time and space.

Beyond the Bastille's representation as a seemingly unconquerable monument, the ways in which the attack upon the fortress is represented show to what extent the Parisian non-elite had usurped the power to alter their own urban setting. As Lynn Hunt and Jack Censer have pointed out, to create contemporary imagery of Revolutionary events was to depict the crowd in action.[24] The group of Parisians who attacked the Bastille was composed primarily of local people who lived in the nearby faubourg of Saint Antoine –shopkeepers and merchants— and of newly minted members of the National Guard.[25] Their recently acquired political agency as a collective force in the months following the events of July 11-14, 1789, was aggressively represented in prints, drawings, and paintings throughout the Revolution. Generally, images of the act of storming the Bastille itself fall into two categories: those that show collective action in which most or all of the fortress is represented, and those that show individualized, usually heroic action, in which the fortress itself is highly abstracted.[26] The earliest images of the storming of the Bastille emphasize the collective action of a diverse group of non-elites and are mostly prints. Later images, made when no part of the edifice was standing, are usually drawings, prints, or paintings conceptualized by academically trained artists, some of which emphasize individual heroics. In later images, the importance of the "vignette" activity of individuals, borrowed from the rhetoric of earlier construction and demolition paintings and prints, is magnified, seemingly to increase narrative interest.

Earlier Bastille prints, however, borrow intensely from the rhetoric of topographical paintings in their emphasis on the drama of destruction. Gun smoke and flames are peppered throughout these images, some seemingly emanating from the edifice. The fortress itself often looms out of the print into the foreground, taking up most of the image's vertical space.[27] These effects only make the Bastille seem more fiendish, identifying the architecture with its nefarious purpose. However, for a fortress with only a handful of prisoners and guards, there is often a great deal of individuals depicted in the normally enclosed fortress space. The

excess of humanity lining the foreground of many of these prints as well as those thronging inside the walled fortress enclosure counterbalances the enormity of the Bastille. The people swarming around it always seem to overwhelm it by sheer number as well as strategic placement in nearly every print depiction. The volume of men attacking the fortress is made proportionate to the volume of the building.

Some of the earliest depictions of the events of July 14 are schematic images, printed in the folk style of *images d'epinal,* where the activity of the taking of the Bastille is both narrated and represented.[28] These were destined for a non-elite audience and would have had a wide distribution.[29] In such early images, the taking of the Bastille is represented as relying on the military-like organization and discipline of the newly formed militia; it is sometimes even difficult to distinguish any civilians among the uniformed and ordered assailants of the Bastille. Despite the massive plumes of smoke emanating from the men's guns in one anonymous image (FIG 4), the scene does not descend into chaos; rather, the men are shown neatly lining up cannons and generally responding to the attack as if part of a military drill.[30] Such a depiction advocates that the attack was well thought out and well executed, which historical accounts do not wholeheartedly confirm. The Parisian attackers are portrayed not as vandals, but as highly trained men justified in carrying out their violent actions. The Bastille itself is represented wholly and frontally, as a fortress, but certainly not an insurmountable one given the perspective that allows the viewer access to its vulnerable interior; inside, the Bastille's governor, De Launay, can already be seen waving the flag of surrender.

This early style of rendering the assault differs somewhat from the collectivity, consistency, and unrelentingness of the assault depicted in later prints. One of the finest examples of this type of print is artist Jean-Louis Prieur's image of the storming of the Bastille (FIG 5). Published two years after the incident in 1791, it was part of a series of prints made by academic artists featuring events from the French Revolution that was printed

multiple times during and after the Revolution: the *Tableaux Historiques de la Revolution Française*.[31] Many of the images in this series, set mostly in Paris, are structured using compositional tactics drawn from both topographical destruction and history paintings. The smoke from the gunfire and the crowd's own burning of the outer buildings of the fortress enclosure of the Bastille takes on three-dimensional qualities as the citizen-troops collectively surge towards the fray. Here, the iconoclasts swarm over the bridges and through the courtyards, pressing forward with an urgency in which they cease to represent individuals, but only the collectivity of the non-elite. The train of men themselves attacking the fortress is dense, and so long that it continues out of the frame of the image; though the Bastille looms especially large in this image, similar in physical presence to that of Robert's painting, the men below it and flowing towards it carry with them the promise of overpowering the structure as they occupy all visible public space. Prieur's print also foreshadows the destruction already evident in Robert's painting by representing iconoclasts taking axes and picks to the already crumbling forecourt buildings. There is no delay in this image between the taking of the Bastille and its destruction; the occupying of the Bastille's space by the non-elite is synonymous with its obliteration.

For contemporary academic painters, the destruction of the Bastille defined the heroism of a nation; the individual actions of great men or mythological heroes, which had previously dominated history painting, did not make as useful a subject when heroism was defined as a group endeavor. The most famous academic images of the taking of the Bastille were produced around 1790 by history painter François-André Vincent and his student Charles Thévenin; they do not seem to have been produced for the Concours de l'An II (24 April, 1794, at the height of the Terror).[32] These versions of the Bastille confrontation barely attend to the iconic aspects of the fortress's architecture; Thevenin's work includes some of

the forecourt buildings and a gesture at a turret (FIG 6). The Bastille instead seems an impenetrable wall before which groups of individuals fight against one another.

Thevenin's work shares with Robert's *Pont au Change* and *Fire at the Hotel Dieu* the anecdotal "vignette" style of popular interaction; however, in the history painting, these interactions are blown up and made heroic. Though the painting bears some similarities to Prieur's print in its prominent placement of the Bastille's attackers in the foreground, this mostly reveals that the Royal space had been taken over by the non-elite, rather than showcasing the collectivity of that take over. Thevenin instead emphasizes and aggrandizes the often antagonistic relationships between individuals, centering them in the image. As opposed to both prints previously discussed which heavily featured the successful tactics of the National Guard, the Sans-culottes population gets pride of place in Thevenin's work. Sans-culottes are everywhere in the foreground: one stands and waves a tricolor flag; others aid a weak man, possibly a prisoner liberated by the attackers of the Bastille. The most prominent Sans-culotte in the left foreground brutally slaughters a royalist Swiss guard in hand-to-hand combat.[33] The guard is impaled on a pile of stones, a feature typical of the foreground of topographical images of destruction, foreshadowing the fate of the fortress. Thevenin's inextricable linking of the Bourbon-employed guard with the stones of the Bastille through a Sans-culotte bayonet reveals the impetus for the Parisians' public performance of architectural iconoclasm. To check the monarch's power, the Sans-culottes must gut the building—a demonic figure even here spewing fire—as they have gutted the guards to access this closed-off urban space.

Eyewitness accounts of the Bastille's destruction, which are less frequently recorded than the taking of it, articulate in similarly embodied metaphors the ways in which the Bastille's very stones bear the stain of royal corruption. The English translation of prisoner Jean Jacques Calet's account of the Bastille's destruction, first published in 1789, noted (not

entirely accurately) that the Bastille's governor was hanged over the battlements of the Bastille itself. "It was determined to see whether the walls of the prison were not as liable to mortality [as its Governor]. In three days, the whole prison was raised to the ground".[34] While it took considerably longer than three days to raise the fortress—a British tourist, Dr. Stearns, visiting Paris in the summer of 1790 noted that it was "…almost demolished, though a few of the dungeons remained"—the sentiment of Calet's account is crucial to understanding how the fortress became so indelibly associated with tyranny that even the popular domination of its public spaces could not make it a successful candidate for architectural repurposing.[35] The perceived wickedness of the people in charge of it—the governor and, more broadly, the monarchy—and of the crimes against citizens that went on inside of it had rubbed off too much onto its stones.

The *Barrières* and Reconstruction

Along with the Bastille, the *Barrières* of Paris were the only other major Parisian buildings to suffer full architectural iconoclasm at the hands of the Parisian population. Built in relative haste from 1785 onwards along with a wall enclosing an area considerably larger in places than the city of Paris itself, the *Barrières*, or customs houses themselves, were each individually designed by famed architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux.[36] Both the customs houses and attendant wall, partially subsidized by the tax collectors of the *ferme générale,* were highly unpopular; they came to signify, through their specific purpose of monitoring and taxing the entry of goods into the city, the physical embodiment of noble abuse of power.[37] This signification is generally understood to be the larger reason behind the Sans-culottes attack on these buildings, though more immediate reasons include an anticipated response to the gathering of royal troops outside Paris, as well as the excess of wine offered to the crowd by the wine merchants in areas outside Paris who wanted fewer taxes on their goods entering the city.[38] Between July 11 and 14, 1789, forty of the fifty-five built customs gate houses

were assaulted by a motley group of petty traders, wine merchants, barrel and building workers, dockers, water-carriers, and other laborers—all in all, a more lower-class crowd than the group that would later attack the Bastille.[39] Unlike the Bastille, however, most of the *Barrières* were re-built just after the iconoclastic attacks, only to be torn down by the urban reforms of the later 19th Century.[40]

The significance of the *Barrières* to the story of architectural iconoclasm in Paris is related to their quixotic architectural style, which only exacerbated the public's anger surrounding their erection. By 1789, multiple individuals had published diatribes decrying the buildings; "…their monumentality and strange forms, exaggerations of traditional architectural motifs in scale and placement to the point of caricature, seemed apt demonstrations of [the crown and nobility's] economic profligacy".[41] The architectural singularity and nefarious purpose of the *Barrières* had become inextricably linked in the public eye. The most consistent extant imagery of *Barrières* is that included within the *Tableaux Historiques de la Revolution,* the upscale series of prints (of which Prieur's *Bastille* was a part) that chronicled the main events of the French Revolution in the topographical style coined by Jeaurat, Demachy, and Robert. New images were added during various print runs to continue the "story" of the French Revolution. Many historical episodes demanded an entry into or exit from Paris; that Ledoux's buildings were conjured to address this demarcation of space throughout the *Tableaux*, especially in the 1794 edition of the prints, reveal their strategic importance and their quick recovery from the iconoclastic activities of 1789. The ways in which the *Tableaux* depicts them over time them show that in their burning and subsequent rebuilding, the *Barrières* had been repurposed from signs of the aristocratic abuse of power to celebrations of the political domination over Paris of the Sans-culottes mob.

Commemorating an event on the night of July 12, 1789, Prieur's "Attack on the *Barrière de la Conférence"* is the first work of the *Tableaux* to feature the *Barrières* and was included in the first set of prints, published collectively in 1791 (FIG 7). The writers of the commentary accompanying the later editions note that the *Barrière de la Conference* was specifically chosen for the series amongst the many looted and burned throughout Paris because of the importance of the iconoclasm enacted upon the statues on monumental pedestals positioned near the *Barrière*; allegorical sculptures represented the regions through which the road to the barrière led, Brittany and Normandy, were beheaded by Sans-culottes.[42] The road itself was a strategically important one with a good deal of public visibility; any noble passing though the city gates to reach Versailles would know, seeing the vandalized monuments and burned gate house, who controlled Paris.[43] In 1791 when the print was first published, this control was even more firmly cemented than it had been on the evening represented in the image.

Much like the earliest images of the Bastille, the assault on the *Barrières* as depicted by Prieur emphasizes the wholeness and materiality of the structure in order to show the significance of its subjugation at the hands of the Sans-culottes. Though smoke is emanating from the building's unseen windows on the right hand side of the image, as well as from the torches of the assailants, the *Barrière* remains intact. Smoke here plays an important role other than just dramatic tension. It references the main object of the iconoclastic activity: to burn the registers, destroying the list of objects that required taxing or that had been taxed. The mob forcibly emptied the building of both its guards and its furniture, the latter of which can be seen in the foreground, piled up like cast-off stones from Robert's *Bastille*. Further loot can be seen cascading out from the windows, thrown to the ground in the same way that Robert's demolition workers threw down the Bastille's rubble in his painting. Once again, the

non-elite population is represented as controlling Paris from the tops of the buildings that had represented their oppression.

As in Prieur's image of the storming of the Bastille, men take up pick axes, raising them high above the customs house to strike it down; that some of these men we know to have been construction workers meant that they had experience in these kinds of demolitions. Their armaments are far cruder than the cannons and guns at the Bastille—most of the men are depicted only with sticks and torches, which also reference their low social status. Prieur represents the architectural detailing of the building with an almost excessive degree of clarity that serves only to emphasize the classed differences between assailant and building. Prieur's careful line-drawn style accentuates the starkness of the building's stoically Doric columns as well as the depth of the quarter-sphere and its casements as they are cut into the façade. The royal crown of the Bourbons can be seen decorating the pediment of the building, floating above a crest of three *fleurs-de-lis* and supported by two winged women. In representing these signs of monarchy with the same intensity as he does the architectural detailing, Prieur reveals the embeddedness of these seemingly additional decorative details within Ledoux's wealth-driven architectural schema. Prieur thus inadvertently reinforces the arguments of the pamphleteers who spoke out against Ledoux's creations; the *Barrières* were indelibly marked by the excess of wealth from which they were funded.

Prieur has rendered the *Barrière* at such an angle so as to show off its décor and emphasize its strange structural features. The building seems all the more pompously formal for its function given its place in the underdeveloped countryside, which, Prieur's drawing emphasizes, now forms the legal definition of Paris. The building's formality contrasts therefore, not only with the iconoclastic activities of the Sans-culottes, but also with the idyllic countryside. In Prieur's image, the Sans-culottes overrun the actual building as well as the wall surrounding Paris. This is not entirely accurate, for a wall over 3.3 meters high could

not have been effortlessly scaled. [44] Yet, Prieur's Sans-culottes seem to do so with

considerable ease. The artist's modification of the wall height and placement of a torch-

wielding Sans-culotte delicately balancing upon the iron-wrought gates shows the extreme

nature of this power reversal; even spaces powerfully associated with the Ancien Regime

were not immune to Sans-Culottes influence. The assailants, who visually replace the flimsy

bars of the gate with their own mass, serve as the new wall through which one must pass to

access Paris. Prieur's Sans-culottes act in full defiance of the wall's alleged secondary

purpose—to keep them contained, either outside or inside.

The next two images in which the *Barrières* are directly represented in the *Tableaux*

were made for the second print run of 1794. In these images, which depict events in 1791, the

Barrières are back, rebuilt and repurposed fully as markers of Sans-culottes, as opposed to

noble, power. The reconstructed *Barrières*, despite the iconoclastic behavior of 1789,

performed their custom house functions until 1791 when the privileges of the *fermiers*

généraux to exact customs tariffs on goods entering and exiting Paris were abolished.[45] By

1794, the *Barrières* had come to define the extent of Sans-culottes political power,

consolidated in 1792 and on full display during the Terror (1793-1794). The will of the

people was enforced from the city center as far as Ledoux's gates, their monolithic nature

standing in for a status quo that had rapidly changed since their inception. The popular re-

appropriation of a royally sanctioned architecture about which little had materially changed

since construction (besides reconstruction) inhabits a space of urban intervention between the

iconoclasm of the Bastille and more tame examples of repurposing extant buildings— such as

the turning of the Louvre, uninhabited by the monarchy for a long time, into a public museum.

The customs house buildings became purposeless after 1791—they contained no technical

instruments of power. Their repurposing was symbolic, as Prieur's prints make clear.

The "Suppression des Barrières et des droits d'entrée, le premier mai 1791" (FIG 8),

also designed by Prieur, prominently features the two customs houses of the *Barrière du*

Maine, which had been attacked by Sans-culottes on the morning of July 14.[46] Prieur's

pristine representation of these reconstructed buildings is linked to their re-appropriation as

venues for Sans-culottes celebration of the free entry of goods into Paris. Not just content to

look on from ground level, the Sans-culottes inhabit the architecture wholly. They stand in

the shade of Ledoux's strange columns or climb atop sacks of grain lying at the feet of those

columns to get a better look. They peer out the buildings's windows and seemingly dance and

drink atop the singular stair-step arches fronting each edifice. They toast to a future full of the

promise of plenitude, eyeing the wine, livestock, and grain arriving into Paris unhindered. The

ease with which Ledoux's structures are dominated by the Sans-culottes contrasts with the

rushing crowds of the Bastille-storming or *Barrière*-burning images—crowds who forcibly

imposed themselves upon the space in question. Here, the banner flying from the customs

house at the right proclaims a "liberté" already won.[47] The Sans-culottes are depicted as

reveling in their victory, not as striving towards it. Their figures take the place of the *fleur-*

de-lis in "Attack of the *Barrière de la Conference*;" the Sans-culottes themselves and their

flag provide the decoration that defines the building's new role. No longer posts of

surveillance and stoppage in the service of royal and aristocratic graft, the *Barrières* have

been repurposed for liberty and the popular rule of law in Paris.

The popular domination of previously aristocratic architecture is further emphasized in

another *Tableaux* print, "The Return of Louis XVI from Varennes to Paris, 25 June 1791,"

featuring the *Barrière de la Roule* (FIG 9). This *Barrière* had also been attacked by the

people of Paris in 1789; the version in the image would have been a rebuilt structure.[48] The

Barrière de la Roule monitored an older road to Neuilly through which the royal family were

forcibly escorted back to Paris after their attempted flight from the country in the summer of

1791; this particular route was allegedly chosen to avoid the more lower-class neighborhoods of Paris.[49] Still, non-elite bystanders overrun the image. They are depicted in the foreground, the background, atop the wall, and at every level of the *Barrière* itself. The disproportionally large size of the *Barrière* to the rest of the image only makes the excess of Parisians on it more pronounced.[50] Bodies overrun its stairs, heads jut out from every window, and people crowd perilously atop its pediments. The decorative function of the *fleur-de-lis* in earlier *Barrière* imagery is not merely replaced, but overwhelmed by lower-class Parisians. The king's procession below them is a triumphal one not for the king, but for the Sans-culottes sitting atop the royal carriage with bayonets raised; their position parallels those individuals atop the customs house. The *Barrière* which had signified an entry into Paris now demarcates the limits of the king's jail; the wall that was built in part to contain the citizens of Paris now corrals him. Prieur encourages this interpretation by representing Sans-culotte bodies within the image on physically higher ground than the king. Louis Capet had, by 1791 and certainly by time the image was printed in 1794, become less monumental than the monarchal buildings that had served him. He had been reconceptualized from Bourbon and divine to "Capet" and mortal, while the very buildings whose extravagance he helped finance were re-appropriated as Parisian bastions of Sans-culottes power. Prieur shows the non-elites of Paris as having taken over the ordering, monitoring, and surveillance functions of the customs houses for their own political and economic ends.

The Bastille and the *Barrières* remain the only great Parisian public buildings that were attacked and subsequently demolished in whole or part in deliberate acts of iconoclasm during the French Revolution. The reconstruction of the *Barrières* following the same Ancien Regime ground plans relatively soon after they were attacked confirms that total destruction was not a pre-requisite for "Revolutionizing" a space or a royal building, either in print or in actuality; in fact, the Revolutionaries found themselves unable to repurpose the destroyed

space of the Bastille for anything more permanent than festivals because they could not agree on the nature and meaning of the structure that should replace the fortress.[51] Yet most representations of the Bastille post-destruction show something taking place in the ex-fortress space, whether it be a fête with a string of lights delimiting the Bastille's old contours or one with a heap of royal symbols to be burned to the ground. Revolutionary topographical depictions evince a certain horror vacui; they resist representing architectural absence. Altering, rather than destroying, present buildings solved this conundrum; as Ozouf points out, Revolutionary imagery sought not to erase histories, but to hide them.[52] One way to alter buildings immaterially was to represent them as being given a new use, filling them with a new kind of crowd. Topographical depictions emphasizing built wholeness offered a conceptual roadmap for actual architectural re-use; indeed, many Parisian buildings were physically amended (instead of torn down) in ways that highlighted the glory of the nation – or at least that of the local Sans-culotte population.

Re-Purposing and Rebuilding: The Real and Ideal

If the *Barrières* imagery of the *Tableaux Historiques de la Revolution Française* ultimately depicts architecture's complicity in the Sans-culotte's control of Paris, Boilly's *Triumph of Marat* (1794) remains one of the few known paintings allying real architectural repurposing, as opposed to iconoclastic destruction, with non-elite power (FIG 10). Before the Revolution, architecture and construction more generally were indelibly associated with aristocratic wealth; Richard Wittman speculates that new architectural projects of the 1780s were viewed with suspicion by the local Parisian population because of the rampant corruption associated with their construction.[53] This corruption was personified, for example, in the quickly and lavishly built *hôtels* of the *Chaussé d'Antin* neighborhood and in the taking over of major public building sites by private investors in the 1770s and 1780s in order to derive more individual profit from them at the expense of greater public utility.[54] To then

appropriate architecture for popular use was, for the Sans-culottes, to claim power back from previous authorities. Many of the actual architectural changes of the French Revolution, with architects Percier and Fontaine leading the charge, were interior updates or additions to current buildings.[55] These updates are less often visualized in Revolutionary painting, with Boilly's work excepted. Boilly painted the little-represented scene of *The Triumph of Marat* for the *Concours* of the Year II at the height of the Terror, in part to counter the claims of unpatrioticness made against him by fellow artist Wicar and in part because the *Concours* offered a source of funding in lean times.[56] The painting shows an exultant Marat, arrested by the Girondins for his extremism in April of 1793 but found not guilty in his trial. Greeting the people of Paris outside the Revolutionary Tribunal where he was acquitted, Marat is shown at the Parisian Palace of Justice, in the Hall of the *Pas Perdus*.[57] But the Palace of Justice has taken on a Revolutionary air; behind Marat, the figure of Justice is carved over the door to the tribunal, which is now branded as "Revolutionary" through the writing above it. The architecture further monumentalizes the victory of Marat—Boilly has framed him as if he is exiting from a triumphal arch.[58] Emphasizing the crowd and their leader, architecture here becomes complicit in the success of non-elite seizure of political power.[59]

This seizure of power, Boilly argues though his depiction of a relatively diverse crowd, is not as frightening as the smoldering fires of the demolished Bastille or the *Barrières* imagery would have one believe. The Sans-culottes presence in the group of people supporting Marat is somewhat downplayed by Boilly. The middle class identity of the people and their disparate placement in small groups forming anecdotal narrative vignettes would have helped the contemporary viewer see them as non-threatening.[60] The people are represented in the best possible light, even as Boilly's cropping of the architecture reinforces their importance to the composition, and therefore, to Marat's victory—such a dense group of non-elites would not have been allowed into this area during the Ancien Regime. This image

reveals the way in which the popular presence en masse outside the tribunal, as well as the addition of the looming figure of "Revolutionary" justice, changed the meaning of the space. The court over which this allegorical figure presides is now the people's court. Architecture designed to humble those who walk through it is here is re-framed as a space constructed to exalt the people and their champion.

If extant architecture could be harnessed to represent popular power not just in its iconoclasm, but also in its repurposing, it could also be harnessed to serve Revolutionary ideals. The ideal of popular unity promised in the early days of the Revolution, not in the bloodlust of the Terror, resurfaced in a painting meant to represent the construction of a new society: Jacques-Louis David's conciliatory Post-Terror work, *The Intervention of the Sabines* (1796-1799) (FIG 11). For this work, David used a subject from ancient history—the Sabine women breaking up the fighting of the men from their own tribe and their Roman abductors, to whom they had been forcibly married— to emphasize the need to overcome past differences and build a collective future.[61] Like the images of the storming of the Bastille and of the attacks on the *Barrières*, the main action of the *Sabines* happens outdoors, in front and on top of a symbol of the reigning political power—in this case, a Roman fortress. The fortress bears an uncanny resemblance to the Bastille.

David's fortress not only looks similar to the Bastille, but its rendering also draws on the ways in which the storming of the Bastille was represented in print culture: rising over the scene to frame the fighting below it. The smoke from topographical disaster prints makes an appearance here as well. Only one of the many iconic Bastille turrets is fully visualized, however, as David chooses to blend this imagery of a real Parisian edifice with that of an ideal city seen at a distance, such as the city from the great French artist Nicolas Poussin's *Landscape with a Calm* (1650) (FIG 12). A citadel like that Poussin's painting is placed on top of the Bastille-like structure in David's painting, the intact "Bastille" serving as a solid

foundation on which the ideals of the future can be built. Scholars have noted that David's painting, made after the artist's prison stay for having been intimately involved in the Terror, continues his trend of using ancient stories to reflect on modern politics; the message of the *Sabines* is that French society should come together, despite the Terror's divisiveness, and continue with the good work of the Revolution.[62] Instead of showing Parisian architecture as a relic of the past in need of being torn down or being updated in its purpose, David uses the hybrid architectural imagery at the back of the painting to lay out a future course for the individuals fighting one another at the front of the painting. The real and the ideal align in David's hybrid Contemporary French/Ancient Roman society and in the hybrid Bastille/Roman Citadel architectural imagery at the back of the painting. Ultimately, the painting's architectural argument sides neither with iconoclasm nor repurposing, but with rebuilding: of a new public edifice and a new society atop the ruins of the first.

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[1] The Pont au Change was named for the regulated moneylenders who had paid for the rebuilding of the bridge in 1639 after a fire, in exchange for the royally protected right to ply their trade in houses that stretched the length of the bridge. Jocelyne van Deputte, *Ponts de Paris* (Paris: Sauret, 1994), 108-110.

[2] For more on the edict, see *Paris and its Environs Displayed in a Series of Picturesque Views, The drawings made under the direction of Mr. [Augustus Charles] Pugin, and engraved under the superintendence of Mr. C. [Charles] Heath, with topographical and historical descriptions*, 1831. For more on urban reform, circulation, and health in eighteenth-century Paris, see Nicholas Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 45 -53.

[3] Nina L. Dubin, *Futures and Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art* of *Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 115-117. See also van Deputte, *Ponts de Paris,* 1994, 116.

[4] van Deputte, *Ponts de Paris,* 1994, 107.

[5] For further information on Demachy, see Marie Pętkowska Le Roux and Françoise Roussel-Leriche. *Le Témoin Méconnu: Pierre-Antoine Demachy, 1723-1807* (Paris: Magellan, 2014). On Jeaurat, see Ryan Whyte, *Painting as Social Conversation: The Petit Sujet in the Ancien Régime* (2008): ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

[6] For an overview of some aspects of Parisian topographical painting conventions practiced by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, Hubert Robert and Jean-Baptise Raguenet, see Christophe Leribault "Saint-Aubin et Paris" in Colin Bailey et al. *Gabriel De Saint-Aubin, 1724-1780* (Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2007), 59-63.

[7] Leribault, "Saint-Aubin et Paris," 60-61.

[8] Christophe Leribault has even characterized Robert as a destruction enthusiast, for Robert chronicled many major Parisian fires of the 18th Century, including those of the Opera, the Palace of Justice, and the Hotel Dieu. The *Bastille* then becomes simply an updated version for Robert of this kind of iconography and not a particular noteworthy version at that. Leribault, "Saint-Aubin et Paris," 61.

[9] Jean Jacques Calet, *A True and Minute Account of the Destruction of the Bastille. By J. J. Calet ... who had been a prisoner there upwards of twenty years ... and who assisted at the demolition of that infamous prison* (London: William Hunt, 1800), 19.

[10] Calet, *A True and Minute Account,* 21. Given the writer's status as a former Bastille prisoner, this is doubtless a hyperbolic description.

[11] Leribault, *Gabriel de Saint Aubin*, 60.

[12] Dubin, *Futures and Ruins,* 63.

[13] For more on this print and a reproduction of it, see Rolf Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille: collections du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris: Paris Musées, 2009), 52-53.

[14] This review was called to my attention in the *Hubert Robert* exhibition catalogue, but it is not fully quoted. Margaret Morgan Grasselli et. al, *Hubert Robert* (Washington : National Gallery of Art, 2016), 249. *Les élèves au salon: ou L'Amphigouri* (Paris: chez Lecomte, 1789), 16. "M.Robert est toujours agréable, et ses tableaux délicieusement touchés…je crois seulement, qu'il auroit du prendre un parti plus sévere pour sa vue de la Bastille. Il pouvoit effrayer, au lieu d'en faire un tableau agréable."

[15] For more on the Bastille's notoriety as it developed in the 18th Century, see Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 15-23.

[16] Anthony Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality; Ledoux and the Barrières of Paris" *AA Files*, 7 (1984): 16, 26.

[17] Szambien notes that the vast majority of buildings erected during the French Revolution were private, not public. Werner Szambien, "Les Architectes parisiens à l'époque révolutionnaire," *Revue de l'Art,* no. 83 (1989), 36. For a detailed discussion on the question of architectural productivity in the French Revolution, see Anthony Vidler, "Researching Revolutionary Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education,* Vol. 44, No.4 (Aug.1991), 206-210.

[18] Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Revolution Française* (Paris: Chamerot, 1847-1855), preface of 1847. As quoted in Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 149.

[19] Regis Michel et al., *Aux armes et aux arts !: les arts de la Révolution : 1789-1799* (Paris : A. Biro, 1988),144-145.

[20] For more on the Louvre's conversion, see Andrew McLellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Arts, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth. Century Paris* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[21] For more on the Festival of Reason ceremonies that took place at Notre Dame in 1793, see Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 97-102. For more on the iconoclasm of the royal statues decorating the cathedral, see Richard Clay, *Iconoclasm in Revolutionary Paris: The Transformation of Signs* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012), 217-224.

[22] Palloy, who ran a construction company, seemingly had workers standing by to dismantle the Bastille; demolition—not yet sanctioned by the government— began the very night of the attack on it (Clay, *Iconoclasm*, 26-29). For more on Palloy, see Richard Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional: Art and Ephemera in Revolutionary France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 71-117. See also Keith Bresnahan, "Remaking the Bastille. Architectural destruction and Revolutionary consciousness in France 1789-94" in *Architecture and Armed Conflict. The Politics of Destruction,* edited by J.M. Mancini and Keith Bresnahan (London: Routledge, 2015), 59-69.

[23] See Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 147 for the illuminated fête image. There are scant few images of the Bastille as a Gothic-style ruin (the only two I have found are reproduced in Reichardt, p. 57 and p.128).

[24] Jack Censer and Lynn Hunt, "Imaging the French Revolution: Depictions of the French Revolutionary Crowd" *American Historical Review* 10, no. 1, (2005): 38-45.

[25] Hervé Degand, ed., *Sous les pavés, la Bastille: archéologie d'un mythe révolutionnaire* (Paris : Caisse nationale, 1989), 121. See also George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1959), 180-184.

[26] For a wide variety of images of the storming of the Bastille, see Degand, *Sous les pavés, la Bastille* (1989) and Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille* (2009).

[27] Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 66.

[28] Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 62-63.

[29] Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 63.

[30] Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 63.

[31] For more on the *Tableaux,* see Claudette Hould, *La Révolution Par La Gravure: Les Tableaux Historiques de la Révolution Française, Une entreprise éditoriale d'information et sa diffusion en Europe (1791-1817)* (Paris: Réunion Des Musées Nationaux, 2002).

[32] This Concours*,* the first major government-sponsored art event since the beginning of the Revolution, asked painters to "represent, on canvas, the most glorious moments of the French Revolution." Regis Michel et al., *Aux armes et aux arts,* 1988, 146. For dating of the Thévenin, see Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *The Perfect Foil: François-André Vincent and the Revolution in French Painting* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 135-136.

[33] Mansfield, *The Perfect Foil*, 133-136.

[34] Calet, *A True and Minute Account,* 18.

[35] Samuel Stearns, *Dr. Stearns's Tour from London to Paris: Containing a Description of the Kingdom of France - the Customs, Manners, Polity, Science, Commerce, and Agriculture of*

the Inhabitants - Its Ancient Form of Government, - and the New - Particulars Concerning the Royal Family - Causes of the Late [...], (London: C. Dilly, 1790), 38.

[36] Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality," 14-16.

[37] Clay, *Iconoclasm*, 15. See also Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality,"14.

[38] Clay, *Iconoclasm,* 15-16.

[39] Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution,* 49. This group was more popular in composition than that which would lead the assault on the Bastille. For the variation in numbers of barrières completed by 1789 and assaulted, see also Clay, *Iconoclasm*, 15-16 and V. de. Clercq, "L'incendie des barrières de Paris en 1789 et le procès des incendiaires," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* (1938): 32.

[40] V. de. Clercq, "L'incendie des barrières de Paris en 1789": 31-32. See also Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality," 16, 26.

[41] Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality," 14.

[42] *Collection complète des tableaux historiques de la Révolution française en trois volumes : le premier, contenant les titre, frontispice, l'introduction, les neuf gravures et neuf discours préliminaires, depuis l'Assemblée des notables, tenue [...]* (Paris: chez Auber, Editeur, et seul Propriétaire: de l'Imprimerie de Pierre Didot l'aîné, an XI de la République Française M. DCCCII, 1802), Vol.1, 36. For the iconoclasm performed on the statues, see Clay, *Iconoclasm*, 15-20.

[43] Claudette Hould, *La Révolution par l'Écriture: les Tableaux historiques de la Révolution française, une entreprise éditorial d'information (1791-1817)* (Paris: RMN, 2005), 122. See also Clay, *Iconoclasm*, 18.

[44] Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality," 15.

[45] Vidler, "The Rhetoric of Monumentality," 26.

[46] Claudette Hould, *La Révolution par le Dessin: les dessins préparatoires aux gravures des Tableaux historiques de la Révolution française (1789-1802)* (Paris: RMN, 2005), 62. See also Momcilo Markovic, "La Révolution aux barrières : l'incendie des barrières de l'octroi à Paris en juillet 1789" *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 372 (2013): 47.

[47] The opening up of the *Barrières* came as the result of a decree from the Constituent Assembly passed at the insistence of the people of Paris. Clay, *Iconoclasm,* 23.

[48] Markovic, "La Révolution aux barrières," 21.

[49] Hould, *La Révolution par le Dessin,* 63.

[50] The *Barrière* is exaggeratedly elevated above the street and wall in Prieur's image; this aggrandizing of architecture is typical of his style. Hould, *La Révolution par le Dessin,* 63.

[51] See Reichardt, *L'imagerie révolutionnaire de la Bastille,* 166 -177, for several failed attempts to envision a monument to replace the Bastille.

[52] Ozouf, *Festivals*, 149-150.

[53] Richard Wittman*, Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 183-189.

[54] Wittman*, Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere,* 183-189.

[55] For more on Percier, Fontaine, and re-use, see Iris Moon*, The Architecture of Percier and Fontaine and the Struggle for Sovereignty in Revolutionary France* (New York: Routledge, 2016), especially Chapter 2.

[56] Susan Siegfried, *The Art of Louis-Leopold Boilly. Modern Life in Napoleonic France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 43.

[57] Siegfried, *Boilly*, 43-45.

[58] Siegfried, *Boilly*, 45. As Siegfried has noted, Boilly cut from the final painting a significant portion of the well-known vaulting of the Hall which he had so carefully rendered in an earlier drawing.

[59] This episode of Marat's life was not often represented because of Marat's varying political fortunes during the Revolution. I have not found another representation of this scene that features a Revolutionary figure of Justice. Another image of the Triumph can be found in *Collection complète des tableaux historiques de la Révolution française en trois volumes,* Vol. 3, "Jean-Paul Marat," unnumbered plate.

[60] Siegfried, *Boilly*, 51.

[61] For more, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Nudité à la Grécque in 1799*," The Art Bulletin,* 80 (2), 1998, 311-335.

[62] Grigsby, "Nudité à la Grécque in 1799*,"* 311-312.