

David Van Zanten
 Mary Jane Crowe Professor in Art and Art History
 Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 60208-2208
 847-491-8024
d-van@northwestern.edu

21,23, 28.i.08

LE FONDS FONTAINE A L'ART INSTITUTE A CHICAGO

I want to apologize most sincerely for not being with you and thank you for your kind invitation and for letting me send this text to be read in my absence. A family crisis is keeping me in Chicago. I regret this deeply: Percier and Fontaine are the missing stone in the ever more complete and splendid edifice of documentation of nineteenth-century French architectural history, all the more so for the Duban project accomplished in 1996, the Labrouste project now underway, and also a possible Hittorff project farther in the future. This meeting at the Hertziana in Rome is of great importance to our understanding of this complex whole.

I. THE FONTAINE PURCHASE, 1927

The story of the arrival at the Chicago Art Institute of the Fontaine collection of 416 volumes – many consistently and elegantly bound in the Empire style – is recorded in a 4-page manuscript, headed “Burnham Library”. The Burnham Library itself had been founded with a bequest of \$50,000 from the architect Daniel Burnham upon his death in Heidelberg in 1912 meant to be a trust fund for a “library of architecture”.¹ The minutes of the Library Committee meeting of February 1, 1927, record the offer of the Fontaine library by Maggs Brothers (through their newly-founded Paris branch). A member of

¹ Martin Ryerson in 1901 had made a parallel bequest to found a general art history library which likewise bears his name. Burnham’s extensive office library would seem to have been distinct, being kept at his successor firm (Graham, Anderson, Probst and White) afterwards, transformed into that of the Graham Foundation upon its founding in 19___, and ultimately purchased by the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal.

Burnham's successor firm, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, was sent to Europe to assess the collection. Upon his favorable report, the Library Committee meeting on March 11, 1927, decided to make the purchase at \$4,620.00 with a loan of some \$5,000.00 and to solicit contributions from the Chicago profession to retire it. The Committee's minutes of April 19, 1927, record the arrival of the collection and the decision to sell "non-architectural" volumes – netting in the end \$775.00, although a list kept by the library staff indicates that the books sold were either duplicates or incomplete copies, especially of Percier and Fontaine's own publications. A book plate was printed and inserted in each volume but the collection itself was dispersed throughout the Institute's holdings.² (I do not know the story of the sale from the standpoint of the Fontaine family in France.)

There are thus some things to be kept in mind in examining the Art Institute's lists of the collection: 1). what was sold upon its arrival 1927, 2). what might have been added to the collection after Fontaine's death (the library having passed to Fontaine's nephew Pierre-François-Louis Fontaine, also an architect), 3). that Fontaine's office in the Hôtel d'Angiviller had been sacked during the events of 1848, and finally, 4). That Fontaine's remarkable *journal* and a mass of original drawings remained in the family's hands. Clearly the copies of Lassus's Villard de Honnecourt (1858), Viollet-le-Duc's Dictionnaire raisonné (1854-1868), César Daly's Architecture privée (1864), Alphant's Travaux de Paris (1889), Paul Vredeman de Vries's Vrscheyden Schrynerwerck in a modern edition of 1869, are a warning that this is not an undisturbed document of P.-F.-

² As was Hittorff's books, when devolved to the University of Cologne, or Henri Labrouste's Italian student drawings when they were given to the Bibliothèque Nationale Cabinet des Estampes, these last dispersed throughout the folios of the Topographie".

L. Fontaine's enterprise. And one regrets that his copy of Flaxman's Iliad of Homer (1803) was sold out of the collection because it might well indeed give a hint of his way of thinking.

The library includes the basic classic professional texts, often in multiple editions: Vitruvius in five editions (Barbaro, 1584, Martin, 1572 and 1628, and Coignard, 1673 and 1684); Alberti in two (Martin, 1553, Bartoli, 1565), Palladio in two (1764 and 1825-1842 from Chapuy, Corbeard and Lenoir); Vignola in six editions (1611, 1640, 1757, 1773, 1802, 1815). Parallel to these predictable texts were the basic French classical works: Androuet du Cerceau's Livre d'architecture (1559, 1648), Philibert de L'Orme's Nouvelles inventions pour bien bastir (1561), Le Muet's Manière de Bastir (1647), Fréart de Chambray's Parallèle (1650), Le Pautre's Desseins de plusieurs palais (1650), Le Brun's Décoration de pavillons and Desseins de fontaines (1693), François Blondel's Cours d'architecture (1675-1683, inscribed "d'Orbay"), Savot's Architecture française (1685), Félibien's Principes d'architecture (1697), Bullet's Nouvelle architecture pratique (1825 edition) Belidor's Architecture hydraulique (1737-1753), Mariette's Architecture française (17380, d'Avilier's Dictionnaire d'architecture civile (1755) and Cours d'architecture (1760), Briseux's Architecture moderne (1764), Rondolet's Art de Bâtir (1812-1817). (Jacques-François Blondel's six-volume Cours d'architecture is missing, perhaps because previously sold.)³

Running parallel to these professional volumes are the mass of archeological texts which emerged beginning in the late eighteenth century to become the core of early

³ These are balanced by a number of less familiar Northern European texts: Albrecht Dürer's Quatre livres in a French edition of 1613, William Chambers' Treatise on Civil Architecture (1759), C. L. Stieglitz's Plans et dessins (1800).

nineteenth-century study: Stuart and Revett's Antiquities of Athens, John Wood's Palmyra, Robert Adam's Spalatro (1764), Saint Non's Voyage pittoresque (1781-1786), Choiseul Gouffier's Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce (1782-1824), Delagardette's Paestum (1799 -- but not Mazois and Gau's Pompeii, while Gell's Pompeiana was sold in 1927 as defective.

Interestingly, in addition to these classic texts was a mass of books of views documenting Rome and, to a lesser extent, Saint Petersburg: Donati, Falda, Vasi, Bellori, Nolli, Bartoli on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, Piranesi's Vedute di Roma; Thomas de Thomon's Description des plans et facades des principaux monuments construits à Saint-Petersburg (1806) and Montferrand's Eglise cathédrale de Saint-Issac (1845). (One remembers that Fontaine wrote Czar Alexander periodic letters on Napoleon's transformation of Paris.) These Rome and Saint Petersburg volumes were more specific to Fontaine's *fonction* as *architecte de l'Empereur et du Roi*, as were also several other publications in the library, records of solemn ceremonies: Entrée triomphante de leurs maiestez Louis XIV, roy de France et Navarre, et Marie Therese d'Autriche son épouse, dans la ville de Paris... (1662), Le sacre de Louis XV, roy de France et Navarre, dans l'église de Reims (n.d.), Description du catafalque et du cenotaphe érigés dans l'Eglise de Paris, le 7 septembre 1774, pour très-grand, très-haut, très-puissant et très-excellent prince, Louis XV, le Bien-Aimé, roi de France et Navarre (1774), etc. (Percier and Fontaine themselves published two such volumes, of the Emperor's *sacre* and of his marriage to Princess Marie-Louisa of Austria.) This is balanced by a thorough documentation of Paris itself, and especially a collection of maps:

those of La Grive (1749-1766), La Caille (1714), Deharme (1763), Jalliot (1778), Verniquet (title page An V) and Jacoubet (title page dated 1836).

There are, however, some interesting side-light in the Fontaine library: a goodly number of books on perspective, starting with Jean Cousin's extraordinary Livre de perspectiue (1560) and Daniele Barbaro's Pratica della perspettiva (1569), Salomon de Caus, La perspective avec la raison des ombres et miroirs (1612), Hendrik Hondius, institutio artis perspectiva (1625), Jean-François Niceron, Le pespective curieuse du reverand P. Niceron (1663), Andrea Pozzo's Perspectiva pictorum atque architectorum (1708), Edme-Sebastien Jeurat's Traité de pespective (1750), and Daniel Fournier's Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Perspective (1764). We remember that it was supposed to have been Fontaine who did the extraordinary perspective plates in the Palais, maisons et autres edifices de Rome.⁴

There is also a small body of original drawings, the vast majority by Fontaine's nephew P.-F.-Louis Fontaine, but several evidently from the uncle's hand, namely a sketch for the military port at Terneuzen in the Netherlands. In addition, there is a bound album of 93 ink and pencil drawings inscribed inside the cover "manuscript acheté à la vented du cabinet de Mr. Dewailly, architecte, member de l'Institut", including a frontispiece "Fragmens antiques contenant plusieurs figures d'idoles, d'obelisques, lettres hieroglyphiques des egyptiens recueillies des marbres antiques se trouvant à Rome & d'autres lieux." Plans for a villa are glued into its pages.

⁴ There is also some representation of more polemical publications of his formative years around 1800: Boullée's project for the Bibliothèque Nationale (1785), Ledoux's Architecture (but the edition of 1847), Viel de Saint Maur's Lettres (1787), Impuissance... (1805) and Principes de l'ordonnance... (1797) -- but not books at all by Quatremère de Quincy or his successor as *secrétaire* of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Raoul-Rochette.

II. THE ARCHITECT'S LIBRARY AS A PROFESSIONAL TOOL

The interest in examining someone's library – even when it is reduced to a mere sale list – is the expectation that it might be a portal into the owner's mind – especially in the case of an artist. This expectation has produced a small but dense literature on architect's libraries, in the case of Britain the seven-volume publication Sale Catalogues of Libraries of Eminent Persons (1971-1974) assembling, in its fourth volume, the sale lists of Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, William Chambers, Robert Adam, George Dance, Robert Smirke and A. W. N. Pugin – by itself a remarkably complete and telling cross-section of the early British profession.⁵ In the case of France and in Fontaine's approximate generation, there were sales of the libraries of J.-N. Huyot (1841), F.-E. Callet (1854), J.-B.-A. Lassus (1858), and Viollet-le-Duc (1880), as well as the gift of Hittorff's library to the city of Cologne (1892) the list of which has been reconstructed by Uve Westfehling and Michael Kiene.⁶

We all know the *topos* of the young man illuminated by the discovery of a personal library focusing a point of view, like the social utopian one evoked in Zola's Travail.⁷ But anecdotal experience points up a disappointing problem in the case of architects: such libraries tend to be very much the same within a specific culture and time. They are professional instruments and as such have to be consistent within their genre in order to be useful. The books are fixed in the conceptual grid of design generation. They are a source of details rather than patterns of conceptualization and the

⁵ James O'Gorman has explored on this in the American context: Architects and their Books

⁶

⁷ Similar to that still existing in a room of the common dining room at the ex-phalanstère at Condé-sur-Vesgre.

architect's uniqueness lies in what he does with these details rather than in the details themselves.

It is precisely this that implies the possible existence of separate, personal libraries. An anecdotal instance occurs in the case of the French-trained American architect Louis-Henri Sullivan. His extensive library had had to be auctioned in 1909 and his student, Frank Lloyd Wright, remembers him reacting in amazement at discovering that he possessed a copy of Charles Garnier's Nouvel Opéra de Paris with its folios of steel-engraved plates as he had no memory of buying it.⁸ Yet we know that this sale did not include Sullivan's personal library which survived intact in his country house in Ocean Springs, Mississippi (at least until Hurricane Katerina in 2005), with his heavily-annotated copy of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass – by far the most important book in his creative life. That volume would never show up in an auction list.

There are necessarily inflections between the libraries of different kinds of architects – for example, a government functionary like Fontaine *premier architecte de l'Empreur* 1813-1814; *architecte du Roi* (1814-1848) as opposed to a professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and master of an atelier, like Jean-Nicolas Huyot, or, for that matter, between classicists like both Fontaine and Huyot and a Gothicismist like Jean-Baptiste Lassus.⁹ In the case of Huyot, historical and archeological publications are more consistently represented – his chair at the Ecole was that of the History of

⁸ So extraordinary does this seem that one wonders if Sullivan might have purchased the core of his library at one time from a single bookseller – perhaps during his visit to Paris in 1893 at the height of his prosperity. The library included complete runs of the journals Revue générale de l'architecture, Intime club, and Encyclopédie d'architecture which must have been purchased whole at some one time.

⁹ In 1892 J.-I. Hittorff's son gave his library to the city of Cologne, and recently efforts have been made to reconstruct the list of its 2,000 volumes: Westfehling, Kiene.

Architecture – rather than books on ceremonial, but there are even more volumes on the science of perspective than in Fontaine’s collection. In the case of Lassus, because there was still a minimal literature of medieval architecture in the 1840’s and 1850’s, the list of his unusually extensive library consists mostly of the same classic texts, filled out, however, with local histories and monographs touching on medieval building as well as religious texts.

There are instances of libraries built up to enable a particular and original perspective of art, the model being Aby Warburg’s library founded in 1889 and eventually structured by a unique cataloguing system.¹⁰ But, to come back to where we started, the Warburg Library is a totally different entity from Fontaine’s which was specifically purchased as a generic architectural collection to serve general professional needs. There is no anecdote of a young Chicago architect illuminated like Zola’s Luc in Travail by the perusal of Fontaine’s books.

III. MARGINALIA AND TRACES OF WORK IN A PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

One of the most fascinating sidelights of the study of a personal library is marginalia, reactions to specific passages in texts inscribed in the margins by their owner. There again is a considerable literature here, most recently perhaps H. J. Jackson’s Maginalia: Readers Writing in Books of 2001, paralleling Anthony Grafton’s disquisition on the

¹⁰ In the American architectural context one might cite two libraries surviving, like Warburg’s, intact: those of Charles Mulford Robinson at Harvard and Barr Fereé at Princeton, in each case tools for the exploration of a new field, city planning and architectural criticism respectively. Tangential to this are lists of basic books drawn up upon the founding of a course of architectural, as for example that made by William Le Baron Jenny, *diplomé* of the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, when in 1876 he was named professor of architecture at the University of Michigan: short but to the point, with Ruprich-Robert’s Flore ornamentale,...

footnote (1997) and Juliet Fleming' study of Elizabethan graffiti (2001).¹¹ This custom of spontaneous commentary has declined steadily since the Renaissance and the invention of printed books, but there are instances in Fontaine's library, for example in his copy of Jean Cousin's Livre de perspectiue (1560) which includes marginal pencil studies of a large palatial building in plan and perspective, although not necessarily from Fontaine's hand.¹²

In the case of Fontaine's library, however, we are confronted with a different sort of marginalia, one making it evident again that this was a professional not a private library: namely the drawn amendations to plates reflecting their professional use, and even the insertion of documents into certain volumes linked to active architectural projects. An album catalogued as Percier's Louvre et l'arc de triomphe du Carrousel is a compendium of loose sheets including four original drawings for the arch bound into it.¹³ Most obvious here are the numerous colored plates of the Palais, maisons et autres edifices and the Recueil de décorations intérieures – but in the case of the Art Institute copies, these are neither consistent nor especially beautiful – there are much better examples elsewhere. (For example, the copy recently purchased for the INHA by Jean-Philippe Garric and just published by Mardaga.) One suspects that the best colored copies were not remaining to be sold in 1927.

More interesting, perhaps, are two bodies of printed documents. First, a series of text and plate volumes recording the history and appearance of the Louis-Philippard

¹¹ Anthony Grafton, The Footnote: A Curious History, Cambridge: Harvard, 1997; Juliet Fleming, Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England, London: Reaktion, 2001.

¹² In style and touch it seems Fontaine's. There is also a lengthy response to Cousin's remarks on the rendering of a palatial façade a page later in the margin.

¹³ One of the plans is distinctly different from the others and the executed project.

Royal properties around Paris, one folio volume for each with a historical text by Jean Vatout – Monceaux, Eu, le Raincy, Neuilly.¹⁴ In the case of the volume for the chateau at Eu, its plates have been used for sketches of additions and alterations which we know Fontaine carried out there.

Second, there are Fontaine's copies of detailed, surveyed maps of Paris, first by Edme Verniquet, and later by Théodore Jacoubet, the latter bearing pencil indications¹⁵ relating to urbanistic projects which Fontaine would have been involved in during the last five years of his life when he was *president honoraire* of the Conseil des Bâtiments-Civils. Fontaine's Jacoubet in Chicago is nowhere nearly so filled with amendments as the second edition in the Bibliothèque Nationale Cartes et Plans,¹⁶ but there are some interesting indications of urbanistic thought: the rue Drouot extended north to the rue de Provence or the rue Saint-Guillaume south of the rue de l'Université cut behind the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées – these drawn with great precision and as built – as well as a sketchy indication of the rue de Rouen extending north from a *place* the boulevard des Capucines past the rue Tronchet extended towards the emerging gare Saint-Lazare, the centrifugal streets north eastward from what would become the Etoile, or the first traces of two east-west streets through the modern third arrondissement, predecessors of the rue Rambuteau and the rue Réaumur – all of which are considered Haussmannian (he arriving in office only shortly before Fontaine's death in October, 1853). Most interesting is a long, thin sheet of tracing paper bearing the plan of a street from the

¹⁴ Interestingly, Huyot's auction list includes a set these same volumes. There are also three folio volumes marked "Extrait..."

¹⁵ An intriguing pencil grid has been drawn over the Louvre in the Verniquet, but it seems to relate to survey lines rather than urban adjustments.

¹⁶ Pierre Pinon,

Temple through the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers to what now is the place de la République, which remained undisturbed between the pages of the Chicago copy of Jacoubet for a hundred and fifty years.¹⁷

All of which is to say that not only was Fontaine's library a professional instrument, but in parts it was a real "working library" in which the difference between the "finished" book and the "working" document blurs.¹⁸ It is this shift from the formally printed to the "working" edition that is natural to such a collection as Fontaine's and also most valuable.

IV. EVIDENCE OF FONTAINE'S SENSE OF URBAN SPACE

The most interesting items in the collection, however, must be two original manuscripts, one that of his Journal des monuments de Paris written originally for Czar Alexander to keep him abreast of Napoleon's architectural and urban projects, and another inscribed on the cover page "Rapports sur les édifices publics de Paris faits par l'ordre de l'Empreur, 1813". The first is a neat, continuous text – almost necessarily a re-transcribed record --

¹⁷ The *pentimenti* are actually quite numerous – one might not pencil lines extending the rue d'Angoulême into the suburbs and a semicircular *place* sketched at the Porte des Amendiens.

¹⁸ The explosion of bureaucracy in the mid-nineteenth century as well as the emergence of cheap forms of printing, especially lithography, worked to exaggerate this blurring, as in the case of the strange folio volume Documents relatives au travaux du Palais de Justice de Paris published by order of the Conseil Municipal of Paris in 1858 between thin, plain grey paper covers, or the almost identical (in format, tailoring and chronology) volume from Vienna, Preisgekrönte Entwürfe zur Erweiterung der inneren Stadt Wien in which the most interesting projects submitted in the Ringstrasse competition of that year are redrawn for quick comparison. (In the case of the Viennese publication, modern writers have regularly re-published the plates as if they were the original projects, misunderstanding the circumstances of their publication.)

and in fact published under the inscribed title in 1892 accompanied by illustrative drawings in the family's hands.¹⁹

The second manuscript, however, is totally unpublished and uncited. It is subscribed, "Mis sous les yeux de l'Empreur le 24 novembre 1813." The project is noted in Fontaine's dairy.²⁰ After his return to Paris after the Russian fiasco and the defeat at Leipzig, Napoleon asked Fontaine and his engineer homologue, Louis Bruyère, to survey the city of Paris to draw up a list of projects in course – an oddly irrelevant enterprise considering the state of the Empire, Georges Poisson has noted, almost a delusion.²¹ The bound report in Chicago is divided by project type – from "abbatoires", "barrières", "bibliothèques", "boulevards" to "rues", "théâtres", "temples" (not unlike Poisson's and Biver's more recent books). It gives the state of each project and emphasizes the need for regularization, especially around public squares, and notes that in many areas new *perceptions* are to be expected, presumably by private entrepreneurs. But, what is important to my mind, is that from the whole grid of project there emerges a sense of its organism.

One divines, first of all, that certain of these projects together would have given the Imperial capital a unified, monumental form that was achieved only forty years later, under Napoleon III, but then in a different sense; second evidence that threaded through this unified system a quite different idea of the re-affirmed quarters, which idea was

¹⁹ Published as Texte explicatif joint aux numéros du Journal des monuments de Paris envoyés à l'empreur de Russie dans les années 1809, 1810, 1811, 1814 et 1815, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1892; Journal des monuments de Paris envoyés à l'empreur de Russie dans les années 1809, 1810, 1811, 1814 et 1815, Paris: Librairie Damascène Morgand, E. Rahir successeur, 1912.

²⁰ Journal, I, p. 371, 15 September, 1813.

²¹ Georges Poisson, Napoléon et Paris, Paris: Berger-Lavroult, 1964. Also: Marie-Louise Biver, Le Paris de Napoléon,

dropped under the nephew in the 1850's and 1860's. That is to say, Fontaine's (and thus the first Emperor's) conception of the city was complex and altered in final execution a half-century later.

This worked through the balancing of two scales. The larger spatial system pivoted on the "Grand Halle", the central market quarter, which was to have been opened as a huge space extending from the Halle au Blé to Rue Saint-Denis, east-west, to produce a spreading, rectangular place of enterprise at the city's heart – "On aura alors au centre de la ville une place immense".²² This would have been larger than the space realized under the nephew in Victor Baltard's Halles Centrales, and encumbered only with "plusieurs corps de bâtiments couverts et fermés pour les marchands de provision [sic]". The Marché des Innocents was to be cleared and embellished with "une belle fontaine au milieu". This spreading space was to stand near, but not to connect with, a grand "Rue Impériale" cut from the center point of the west façade of the Louvre to the place de la Bastille.²³

Both of these projects are known, although nowhere else so neatly laid out as in this MS – Pierre Pinon implies that the Rue Impériale had a furtive existence in the drawers of the administration for many decades. What hasn't been added to this mix is a series of street openings and market regularizations also outlined in Fontaine's text which, when laid out on Verniquet's map of Paris, emerges as at least four neighborhood or quarter centers (namely the marchés Saint-Germain, des Blancs Manteaux (Saint-Gervais), Saint-Martin and des Carmes) with short street extensions forming a local grid binding these units together but not extending beyond to unify the quarters themselves.

²² Not unlike the Forum Bonaparte conceived contemporaneously in Milan.

²³ Pierre Pinon on – Mondernité avant Haussmann

That is to say, the first Napoleon was content to leave the quarters independent and uninterrupted by monumental works – the very project second Napoleon eschewed.²⁴

Here I should end, perhaps with one speculative suggestion: that in the pages of Fontaine’s “Rapports” as well as in the surprising richness of the perspectives of the Palais, maisons et autres édifices and the complex of perspective manuals in his library, we might have a glimpse of something personal in this otherwise resolutely professional book collection -- namely an interest in closed locality. When this first emerged in his perspectives of the 1790’s this seems a continuation of late eighteenth century Davidian spatial tropes²⁵ – and we remember that Percier claimed a huge debt to the Davidian Drouais – but when folded back on Paris under Napoleon, it takes on a real social valence and urbanistic solidity, suggestive of what just after 1830 his Percier’s student Letarouilly accomplished in his extension of the Collège de France and Duban so delicately achieved in the courtyards of the Ecole des Beaux-arts itself. Their use of screens to build up from the chaotic inherited urban texture seems ultimately prepared by the arcade mediating around Fontaine’s Chapelle Expiatoire (1815-1820), his only independent and unencumbered work. What he did was build an arcaded *place* in the undignified city quarter where Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been summarily interred, but a phantasmagorical *place* for its surface is of grass, raised above the streets around, while the buildings in which the arcade should open inward have evaporated leaving the rugged surroundings in tact (until Haussmannization) and the arcade thus transformed into arosolia opening outward functioning as a funereal lens through which the quiet

²⁴ There is an important literature of the Paris quarters, including the studies of David Garrioch.

²⁵ Cf. Thoms Crow, Emulation; Ortani

columned martyrium is glimpsed. A text out of place in the Fontaine library declares of this project: "...Elle fera déplorer que son auteur au lieu de dépenser son talent à terminer plusieurs monumens des siècles passés et notamment le Louvre, avec une abnégation de lui-même et un respect pour la pensée des premiers architectes qui rehaussent son propre mérite, n'ait eu que cette seule occasion de léguer à la France un monument digne de lui et d'elle."²⁶

²⁶ Normand fils, extrait de l'ouvrage de Monumens funéraires des cimetières de Paris