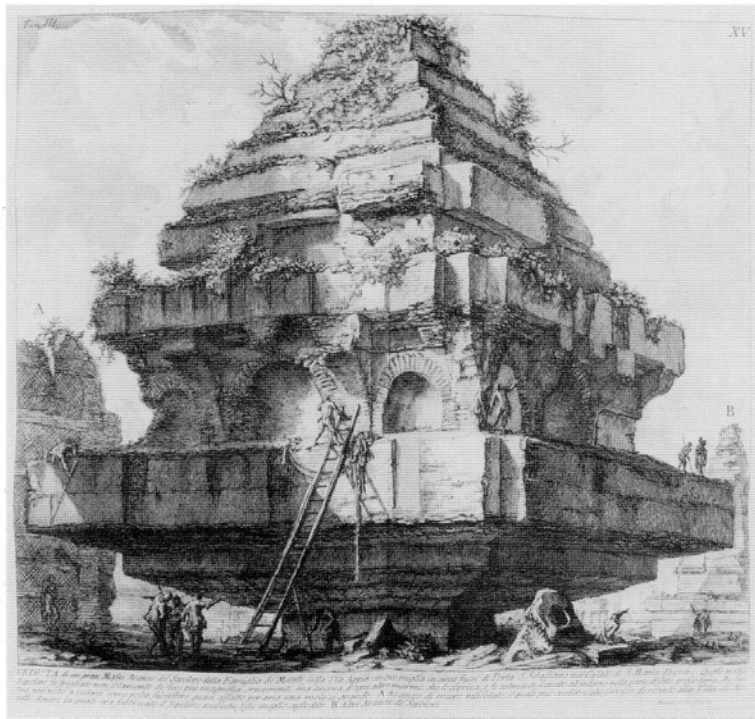


# architectura

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I/2003



Winckelmann

Gedanken  
über die  
Nachahmung der Griechischen  
Werke  
in der  
Mahleren und Bildhauer-Kunst.



*Vos exemplaria Græca  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*  
HORAT. ART. POET.

1755.

1. Title Page from J. J. Winckelmann's 1755 edition of the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung...*

## Winckelmann, Piranesi and the Graeco-Roman Controversies: A late exchange in the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes*

Vos exemplaria Graeca  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna<sup>1</sup>  
Horat. Art. Poet.

Jeder sei auf seine Art ein Grieche,  
aber er sei's  
J. W. v. Goethe

### Introduction

»Good taste, which is gaining more and more throughout the world, first began to develop under a Greek sky.«<sup>2</sup> With this well-known opening to the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* (1755) (fig. 1) Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) hoped to achieve a great deal. Having made his way through the culturally barren Berlin of King Friedrich II and the stifling pietism of Halle to flourish in the Dresden of August III, Winckelmann sought to counter the influence of the Francophile courts of Germany<sup>3</sup> and to reject the general conservatism of German letters as epitomized by Leipzig's Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766).<sup>4</sup> Not merely concerned with countering French domination in the arts, Winckelmann adopted a philosophical stance opposing both the empty scholasticism of polyhistorians such as Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and his circle,<sup>5</sup> as well as the »objectless« aesthetics advanced by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762).<sup>6</sup> Instead, Winckelmann advocated a direct return to the »purest springs of art«, insisting that »to seek these springs is to journey to Athens.«<sup>7</sup> In thus wishing to shift German thought from the universal and abstract to the specific and concrete, Winckelmann sided with a younger generation interested in charting new, empirical histories based on non-literary rather than literary evidence. It was, as Joseph Addison had asserted, »much safer to quote a medal than an author.«<sup>8</sup>

Winckelmann did, however, borrow much that was both literary and French including the new-found

infatuation with the ancients that followed after the wounds suffered from the initial battles of the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes* had healed. In terms of style

<sup>1</sup> »Nehmet Euch die griechischen Muster zur Hand bei Tag und bei Nacht«. The motto on the title page of the first issue of the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung...* It was deleted from the second edition of the following year.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Thoughts on the Imitation of the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, in: H. B. Nisbet (trans.), *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism. Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller and Goethe*, Cambridge 1985, pp. 31–54, esp. p. 32. All quotes in English are from this edition. »Der gute Geschmack, welcher sich mehr und mehr durch die Welt ausbreitet, hat sich angefangen zuerst unter dem griechischen Himmel zu bilden« in: *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauer-Kunst*, (Friedrichstadt 1755; Dresden/Leipzig 1756). From: Walther Rehm, *Kleine Schriften, Vorreden, Entwürfe*, Berlin 2002, p. 29. All quotes in German are from this edition.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King August III of Poland successor to August der Starke (1694–1733). In 1748 Winckelmann became the librarian and assistant to Count Büнау at Nöthnitz near Dresden.

<sup>4</sup> The example of Johann Christoph Gottsched, the »Professor of Leipzig« is frequently cited as writing passages such as: »Die gescheitesten Köpfe haben seit 6000 Jahren schon lange versucht, was sich schicke und tun lasse oder nicht. Auf ihrer Bahn geht man am sichersten. Wer von ihr klügelnd oder verwägen abweicht, dem geht es wie dem Ikarus oder Phaeton.«

<sup>5</sup> Winckelmann rejected the work of Wolff in general, deriding it as »Kindereien, ohne große Mühe zusammengeschiebert, die endlich die Mäuse fressen werden«. See Carl Justi, *Winckelmann und seine Zeitgenossen* (1866), 5th ed., reprint ed., 3 vols., Cologne 1956, vol. I, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Winckelmann had studied under Baumgarten in Halle but was dismayed that Baumgarten did not use objects of art in developing his system of aesthetics.

<sup>7</sup> »Die reinsten Quellen der Kunst sind geöffnet: glücklich ist, wer sie findet und schmecket. Diese Quellen suchen heißt nach Athen zu reisen; und Dresden wird nunmehr Athen für Künstler«. Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Addison, *Dialogues upon the usefulness of Ancient Medals*, in: *Miscellaneous works, in verse and prose ... With some account of the life and writings of the author, by Mr. [Thomas] Tickell*, 3 vols., London 1726 (reprint ed.: New York 1976). Quoted in Arnaldo Momigliano, An-

and taste, Greece was touted once again as absolute exemplar and of the generation following the initial phase of the *Querelle*, the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670–1742) was among those suggesting that the »greatest part of the Greeks were connoisseurs«.<sup>9</sup> Lord Shaftesbury (1671–1713) also voiced high praise, noting that the correspondence between political liberty and the advancement of the arts proceeded as Greece »grew more and more polite«.<sup>10</sup> And, only two years prior to the publication of the *Gedanken*, the Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713–1769) again applauded this ancient culture of polite connoisseurs, insisting that »architecture owes all that is perfect to the Greeks, a nation privileged [...] to have invented everything connected with the arts«.<sup>11</sup>

As the century unfolded, Greece increasingly served as a screen for the projections and aspirations of European culture. Winckelmann not only followed this trend, but exemplified it; codifying a position that coincided with the aesthetic interests of previous generations while laying the ideological foundations for the aspirations of subsequent ones. Not wishing to recount Winckelmann's assessment of individual works of art, this paper briefly reviews his debt to Enlightenment constructions of Greece (whether historical or imaginary) before turning to the Graeco-Roman controversies in which Winckelmann and Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) played well-known, opposing roles. Rewriting the history of art as a history of style, Winckelmann forged a place unique in history for the Greeks and provided an aesthetic basis for rallying German resistance to French cultural hegemony. Piranesi, seeking to legitimize Italy's own claims of superiority over France, fought to reestablish Roman priority over the Greeks. Armed with rhetorical devices both verbal and visual, the offensives launched under »Graeco-Roman« banners lay competing claims to the universalizing domains of aesthetics and philosophy while constructing identities along cultural and nationalistic fronts.

The Graeco-Roman controversies have been delineated by Wittkower,<sup>12</sup> Kaufmann,<sup>13</sup> Wilton-Ely,<sup>14</sup> Miller<sup>15</sup> and others. Most often the French theoretician Laugier and the slightly younger architect Julien-David Le Roy (1724–1803) are foregrounded as bat-

tlefront proxies while Winckelmann is assigned a commanding but distant position. Systems of patronage shielded Winckelmann from the attacks which Piranesi

cient History and the Antiquarian, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 13, 1950, pp. 285–315, esp. p. 299. As to the relationship of architecture and medals, Addison writes: »There is an ingenious gentleman of our own nation extremely well versed in this study, who has a design of publishing the whole history of architecture, with its several improvements and decays, as it is to be met with on ancient coins. He has assured me that he has observed all the niceties of proportion in the figures of the different orders that compose the buildings on the best preserved medals. You here see the copies of such ports and triumphal arches as there are not the least traces of in the places where they once stood. You have here the models of several ancient temples, though the temples themselves, and the Gods that were worshipped in them, are perished many hundreds of years ago. Or if there are still any foundations or ruins of former edifices, you may learn from coins what was their architecture when they stood whole and entire. These are the buildings which the Goths and Vandals could not demolish, that are infinitely more durable than stone or marble, and will perhaps last as long as the earth itself. Joseph Addison, *Dialogues Upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals, Especially in Relation to the Latin and Greek Poets*, Glasgow 1751, pp. 23–24. Whoever Addison's »English gentleman« might have been, Fischer von Erlach won great renown by following precisely this course of action. Of interest is Addison's insistence on the durability of that which is generally considered as ephemeral – an attitude Piranesi would adopt towards his engravings.

<sup>9</sup> Abbé Dubos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting*, Thomas Nugent (trans.), 2 vols., London 1748, reprint ed. New York 1978, vol. II, p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author, in: L. E. Klein (ed.), *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Cambridge 1999, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture*, Paris 1753; expanded second ed. 1755. W. and A. Herrmann (trans.), *An Essay on Architecture*, Los Angeles 1977, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, Piranesi's Parere su L'Architettura, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 1938–1839, p. 147–158. republished as »Piranesi's Architectural Creed«, in: *Studies in the Italian Baroque*, R. Wittkower, London 1975, pp. 235–246.

<sup>13</sup> Emil Kaufmann, Piranesi, Algarotti and Lodoli: A Controversy in XVIII Century Venice, in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 46, 1955, pp. 21–28.

<sup>14</sup> John Wilton-Ely, Vision and Design: Piranesi's »Fantasia« and the Graeco-Roman Controversy, in: G. Brunel (ed.), *Piranesi et les Français; Colloque tenu à la Villa Médicis 12–14 Mai 1976*, Rome 1978, pp. 529–552; id., Utopia or Megalopolis? The »Ichnographia« of Piranesi's »Campus Martius« Reconsidered, in: Allesandro Bettagno (ed.), *Pi-*



directed against Laugier and Le Roy, whose disposition towards Greece made them obvious targets. But, while a focus on Laugier and Le Roy in relation to the Graeco-Roman controversies illuminates issues of aesthetics and cultural identity, it obscures another concern central to both Winckelmann and Piranesi: the concern of history. The controversies emphasize Winckelmann's normative aesthetics while downplaying his credentials as historian. Similarly, Piranesi's avid antiquarianism made him as conversant with history as his erudite contemporaries; his texts displaying not only the trappings of scholarship but, with their footnotes, citations and quotations, exhibiting a great deal of historical rigor.<sup>16</sup> While it cannot be claimed that Piranesi worked as a systematic historian, in the mid-eighteenth century systematic history was a discipline still in its infancy. Thus one can succinctly state that if delineating Piranesi's differences with Laugier and Le Roy raises questions of aesthetics, juxtaposing him with Winckelmann raises issues of history.

Accepting this point illuminates another: many issues central to the Graeco-Roman controversies find their source in the *Querelle* and its English counterpart, the *Battle of the Books*. Inaugurated by Charles Perrault's (1628–1703) seminal *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences* (1688), this complex, varied and drawn-out affair between ancients and moderns cannot be retold in depth here.<sup>17</sup> Suffice it to say, the often raging debate of whether the ancients or the moderns were more advanced was reflected in a division between the arts and sciences, each of which in turn suffered further divisions (for example, between literature and painting) with the lot beset by the problems of imitation versus originality and the rôle of the genius in artistic and scientific creation. Moreover, the emphasis on these various combinations shifted from country to country. But despite national variations, the centrally important issue underlying the complexity of this debate concerns the relationship of ancient knowledge to modern life and, finally, the purpose and nature of history itself. For radical moderns such as Descartes concerns of history were irrelevant: man's problems were to be solved by philosophy. But for others the *Querelle* brought the comparative merits of rhetoric and antiquarianism,

of literary and non-literary evidence, to the center of heated debate. In doing so, it generated a central irony for both ancients and moderns: classical scholarship is a modern invention. Therefore, as scholarship continued to develop throughout the eighteenth century, aspects of the *Querelle* surfaced again and again, extending finally to the work of Edward Gibbon. It is in this context that the rôle of Winckelmann and Piranesi in the Graeco-Roman controversies must be understood.

ranesi tra Venezia e l'Europa: Civita' Veneziana Saggi, Florence 1983, pp. 293–304. See also Wilton-Ely's lengthy introduction in Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Observations on the Letter of Monsieur Mariette*, C. Beamish and D. Britt (trans.), Los Angeles 2002, pp. 1–83.

<sup>15</sup> Norbert Miller, *Verteidigung des Erhabenen. Der Griechen-Streit*, in: *Archäologie des Traums: Versuch über Giovanni Battista Piranesi*, Munich 1978, pp. 221–290; id., *Winckelmann und der Griechenstreit. Überlegungen zur Historisierung der Antiken-Anschauung im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Thomas Gaetgens (ed.), *Johann Joachim Winckelmann 1717–1768*, Hamburg 1986, pp. 239–264.

<sup>16</sup> Whatever Piranesi's scientific and historical aspirations may have been, Anthony Grafton states that »In the eighteenth century, the historical footnote was a high form of literary art«. See: A. Grafton, *The Footnote. A Curious History*, Cambridge/Mass. 1997, p. 1 (first published as *Die tragischen Ursprünge der deutschen Fussnote*, Berlin 1995). For a discussion of the relationship of text to image in the work of Piranesi see Corinna Höper, *Die »Legende zum Bild« – Über das Verhältnis von Schrift und Darstellung in den Radierungen Piranesis*, in: C. Höper et. al. (eds.), *Giovanni Battista Piranesi – Die Wahrnehmung von Raum und Zeit*, Marburg 2002, pp. 9–20.

<sup>17</sup> The literature on this topic is extensive. A recent, valuable discussion on the genesis and lasting impact of the *Querelle* can be found in Joan Dejean, *Ancients against Moderns. Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle*, Chicago 1997. Dejean judges the *Parallèle* as a »prophetic creation: a miniature Encyclopédie, it is the first work to treat literary, artistic and scientific accomplishments at the same time and equally worthy of consideration« (p. 49). See also Hans-Robert Jauss, *Ästhetische Normen und Geschichtliche Reflexion in der »Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes«*, in: *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences*, Munich 1964, p. 8–64; and Hans Kortum, *Charles Perrault und Nicolas Boileau. Der Antike-Streit im Zeitalter der klassischen französischen Literatur*, Berlin 1966. Charles Perrault, author of the *Parallèle*, was assistant to Jean-Baptiste Colbert and responsible for the administration of Louis XIV's buildings; »charged with promoting the physical manifestation of the monarch's glory«. See Charles Perrault, *Memoirs of My Life*, intro. and trans. by J. M. Zarucchi, Columbia 1989.

### Winckelmann and Piranesi

Traditionally portrayed as the father of archaeology and the founder of art history,<sup>18</sup> Winckelmann synthesizes elements of French, English and Italian literary discourse into his own concern for Greek architecture and sculpture.<sup>19</sup> Anthony Vidler defined this interest as relating »an external, context-related history of art objects to an internal, formal and aesthetic treatment.«<sup>20</sup> This was also a central concern of the *Querelle*. Attempts at reconciling neoclassicism's a-historical and autonomous rules of art with an aesthetic historicism allowing for essential differences between ancients and moderns or between cultures and nations had dominated aesthetic discourse since the outbreak of hostilities between Charles Perrault and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), the *Querelle's* leading ancient. But whereas the trajectory of the *Querelle* demonstrates a gradual shift of interest from the internal to the external relations of art, Winckelmann's reconciliatory classicism avoided both the rigid formalism of the neoclassicists and the relativism of the moderns; his stance ultimately steering closer to the position of Boileau. Winckelmann's central aesthetic tenet of a »noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur«<sup>21</sup> is deeply indebted to Boileau's translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsus* (1674), the translation that introduced the notion of the sublime into popular European critical discourse.<sup>22</sup> Winckelmann freely partakes of the mid-eighteenth century understanding of the beautiful and sublime but also demonstrates a particular debt to German Pietism.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps most interestingly, he introduces the possibility of the beautiful developing and progressing towards the sublime, formulating this concept on the occasion of his first visit to the Temples at Paestum: »Through unity and simplicity all beauty becomes sublime.«<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to his aesthetics, Winckelmann's construction of history has other precedents. Articulated as a series of progressions, flowerings and declines, it follows in the humanist tradition of Vasari's *Lives*. However, his association of artists with their national origins relies on the writings of Roger de Piles (1635–1709) and it was this association that would come to bear on the competing claims of aesthetic origin and accomplishment that marked the Graeco-Roman controver-

sies.<sup>25</sup> In deploying the rhetorical tropes of the sublime and the beautiful to delineate cultural development, he borrows considerably from the Comte de Caylus

<sup>18</sup> Winckelmann himself was instrumental in creating his own myth of originality, writing in 1764 that »Die Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums, welche ich zu schreiben unternommen habe, ist keine bloße Erzählung der Zeitfolge und der Veränderung in derselben, sondern ich nehme das Wort Geschichte in der weiteren Bedeutung, welche dasselbe in der Griechischen Sprache hat, und meine Absicht ist, einen Versuch eines Lehrgebäudes zu liefern«. J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, A. H. Borbein et. al. (eds.), Mainz am Rhein 2002, p. XVI. Wolf Lepenies has trenchantly examined Winckelmann's claim in relation to similar claims made in the natural sciences, writing that the name of Winckelmann is conjoined with »einer der großen Schöpfungsmythen in der Geschichte der Wissenschaften«. See W. Lepenies, *Der andere Fanatiker. Historisierung und Verwissenschaftlichung der Kunstauffassung bei Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, in: Herbert Beck et. al. (eds.), *Ideal und Wirklichkeit der bildenden Kunst im späten 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1984, pp. 19–29, esp. p. 22. See also W. Lepenies, *Autoren und Wissenschaftler im 18. Jahrhundert, Buffon, Linné, Winckelmann, Georg Forster, Erasmus Darwin*, Munich 1988, pp. 91–120, esp. pp. 104f., and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Antiquarianism, the History of Objects, and the History of Art before Winckelmann*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62, 2001, pp. 523–541, esp. pp. 523ff.

<sup>19</sup> Winckelmann held the »sculpture addresses the mind, soul, and the senses of man in equal measure, whereas the painted contour which binds form to plane gives only an abbreviated image of reality«. See Barbara Maria Stafford, *Beauty of the Invisible: Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of the Invisible*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 43, 1980, pp. 65–78, esp. p. 71. Also Ingrid Kreuzer, *Studien zur Winckelmanns Aesthetik. Normativität und historisches Bewußtsein* (Winckelmann-Gesellschaft Stendal Jahresausgabe 1959), Berlin, 1959, p. 97. Presumably his understanding of sculpture also applied to architecture, towards which he turned his attention after arriving in Rome.

<sup>20</sup> See Anthony Vidler, *The Aesthetics of History. Winckelmann and the Greek Ideal*, in: id., *The Writing of the Walls*, Princeton/N.J. 1987, pp. 125–137, esp. p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> In the *Gedancken* Winckelmann asserts that which was to become a paradigmatic formulation: »Finally, the universal and predominant Greek characteristic of the Greek masterpieces is a noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur, both in posture and expression.« Winckelmann/Nisbet (as note 2), p. 42; »Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der Griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfachheit, und eine stille Größe, so wohl in der Stellung als auch im Ausdruck« Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, *Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours traduit du grec de Longin*, Paris 1674. The history and influence of this translation of the

(1692–1765),<sup>26</sup> identified by some scholars as being responsible for the creation of the *goût grec*.<sup>27</sup> And if Winckelmann describes Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) as »one of the learned liars and windbags«,<sup>28</sup> he does not take fundamental exception with Bellori's »Idea of Beauty« in which artistic ideas are derived from the sensual, not in terms of sensualism, but in the neo-aristotelian tradition.

Uniquely synthesizing his sources, Winckelmann sympathizes with the ancients rather than the moderns. But by shifting the focus from classical literature to sculpture, then rejecting the notion of the antique as historically unified and concentrating on the period spanning from the victory of the Greek city states over the Persians (479 BC) to the death of Alexander the Great (323 BC), Winckelmann's conception of history parts decisively with Boileau and his other predecessors. And by turning his attention from the female to the male nude, he further distinguishes his interests from those of the mid-eighteenth-century connoisseurs. Most importantly, he immerses himself in Greek culture as if, in the words of Madame de Staël, he became a »pagan, in order to penetrate the spirit of the ancients«. <sup>29</sup> Winckelmann's early work, stopping short of expressing this mythic past in nostalgic terms,<sup>30</sup> establishes the possibility of historical continuity and reclamation through imitation. »The only way for us to become great, and indeed – if this is possible – imitable, is by imitating the ancients«,<sup>31</sup> is his oft-repeated dictum from the *Gedancken*.<sup>32</sup> Winckelmann fuses the artistic achievements of the Greeks with an idealized understanding of their moral and philosophical culture and envisions a golden age not distant and inaccessible,<sup>33</sup> but intensely and emotionally relevant to the present. For him, the Greeks had discovered the laws of Nature and to imitate them was to imitate not only Nature, but a nature perfected.<sup>34</sup> At the very least, »The study of nature must [be] a slower and more laborious way of discovering perfect beauty than the study of ancient art«. <sup>35</sup> Winckelmann's interest in recapturing Greek antiquity for the cultural revitalization of the present is very close, as we shall see, to Piranesi's interest in reclaiming the architectural history of Rome. Similarly, Winckelmann sharply distinguishes between the discovery, copying and true imitation of

nature, asserting that »[t]he imitation of natural beauty is either based on a single object, or it collects observations from various distinct objects and unites them

original text by Longinus, which ran to more than fifteen editions by the mid-eighteenth century, has been well documented, see for example Jules Brody, *Boileau and Longinus*, Genève 1958. Of interest is that Boileau had translated, or rather mistranslated, a term from the original Greek meaning »greatness« as »simplicité«, which he held to be similar to »sublimité«. Winckelmann brought this together with a separate, German etymological tradition for the term »edle Einfalt«, which was close in meaning to the French »noble simplicité«. These terms assisted in transforming a religious to an aesthetic topos. In terms of »taste« these concepts were generally opposed to the excessiveness of the Baroque and the frivolity of the Rococo. Lessing, however, was to associate the concept of edle Einfalt more with nature than with art, writing in 1753: »Seine Verse sind Kinder der Natur, welche in der edelsten Einfalt dahinfließen«. Similarly Wieland insisted that Einfalt meant an unfalsified (»unverfälschte«) Nature. See Wolfgang Stammeler, »Edle Einfalt«: Zur Geschichte eines kunsthistorischen Topos, in: *Wort und Bild: Studien zu den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Schrifttum und Bildkunst im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1962, pp. 161–190, esp. p. 167; and Max L. Baeumer, Winckelmanns Formulierung der klassischen Schönheit, in: *Monatsheft für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur*, 65, 1973, pp. 61–75, esp. pp. 64f. In terms of the earlier French tradition, Martin Fontius writes that for individuals such as Claude Fleury, in the circle associated with the Académie de Lamoignon, »simplicité« was understood in conjunction with the early periods of Greek and Hebrew history, those closer to nature than the »pleasure-addicted present«. As such, it was very much a term of cultural criticism. The term »noble simplicité« can be found by Fénelon, Dubos, the young Voltaire and the Comte de Caylus. Charles Rollin cited it as a general criterion for good taste in his *De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres*, 2 vols., Paris 1726–28.

<sup>23</sup> Winckelmann's own particular contribution to the mid-eighteenth-century understanding of the concept was to add the notion of »Stille«, which derived from a Christian-Stoic tradition and particular pietist expressions such as »simplicity of heart«. Winckelmann, by his own admission, borrowed this term from the historian Saint-Real, although there are no further recognizable influences of the latter on the former. See M. Fontius, Winckelmann und die französische Aufklärung, in: *Sitzungsbericht der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst*, Berlin 1968, pp. 11–12. See also August Langen, *Der Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus*, Tübingen 1968. Klopstock, reviewing Winckelmann's *Gedancken*, noted a danger that the »stille Größe ein wenig zu ruhig ist« (the tranquil grandeur is a bit too quiet). See F. G. Klopstock, Eine Beurteilung der Winckelmannischen Gedanken über die Nachahmung der



into a whole. The former we call copying or portraying a likeness [...] the latter, however, is the way to universal beauty and its ideal images; it is the way of the Greeks.«<sup>36</sup>

As an author, Winckelmann's effectiveness lies less in his consistency than in the contradictions that would provoke others to reflection and argumentation. His adaptation of the Abbé Dubos' notion of the correspondence of climate and taste as the explanation for the preeminence of Greek culture opened the doors to the nascent historicism which, particularly in the hands of Herder, would soon follow.<sup>37</sup> But Winckelmann remained faithful to the ancient notion of the absolute and universal character of human nature, maintaining this position even as he separated the ancients into clearly defined Roman and Greek camps.<sup>38</sup> This separation not only projected onto Greeks and Romans aspects of mid-eighteenth century battles between the ancients and the moderns, it also intersected with a rejuvenated German interest in constructing its own unique and independent cultural identity.<sup>39</sup> »Everyone found in the ancients what he needed, or wished for. Before everything, his own self« reflected Friedrich Schlegel.<sup>40</sup> It was in this context that the *Gedanken*, an essay of forty-some pages with a first printing of a mere fifty copies, inaugurated the Hellenic classicism of northern Europe that, though varied, continued until its final transformation by Nietzsche.<sup>41</sup>

Given the fragmentary nature of early- and mid-eighteenth-century knowledge of Greek culture, Winckelmann's synthesis of classical history and culture, art and philosophy, was indeed remarkable. Some seventy years earlier Spon and Wheler awkwardly described the Parthenon as the »finest mosque in the world«.<sup>42</sup> A few decades later, at the close of the *Battle of the Books*, both English *virtuosi* and continental savants (eventually including Winckelmann) were flummoxed by the famous forgery known as Dr. Woodward's shield.<sup>43</sup> Certainly real progress was made and excitement generated by the discoveries of Herculaneum (1736) and Pompey (1748). But the artifacts from these finds, some making their way to Dresden where they remained packed in their shipping boxes »like herrings« awaited even basic assessment.<sup>44</sup> Other attempts at documentation such as those of the Comte de Caylus were, like

the earlier work of the great Maurist, Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), erudite collections but historically unsystematic.<sup>45</sup> The first reliable account of the ruins

griechischen Werke in den schönen Künste (1760), in: F. G. Klopstock. *Ausgewählte Werke*, Munich 1962, pp. 1049–1054, esp. p. 1051. For a more current summary of these concepts in relation to German Pietism see Joachim Jacob, *Heilige Poesie. Zu einem literarischen Modell bei Pyra, Klopstock und Wieland*, Tübingen 1997, pp. 22–36. Dr. Jacob notes that »Einfalt« did not exclude »Mannigfaltigkeit« (manifold or the »greatest variety«), linking this understanding to the neo-platonic tradition and a formulation by Nicolas of Cusa in his *De docta ignorantia* in which the manifold comes together in God »who folds everything into the simplicity of unity« [omina in sua simplicitate unitas complicans]. I am grateful to Dr. Jacob for this reference.

<sup>24</sup> »Durch die Einheit und Einfalt wird alle Schönheit erhalten«. Quoted in H. Protzmann, *Winckelmanns Idee vom gezügelten Ausdruck als Fundament seiner Ästhetik*, in: *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden*, 22, 1991, pp. 49–57, esp. p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> As in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, Dresden 1764. Before Winckelmann, art, if it was concerned with the objects themselves, was mostly related in terms of the »lives« of the artists. Such was the case with Bellori's *Lives* (1682) as well as Roger de Piles *Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1699). The notion of »style« was generally used to distinguish between individual artists or schools, but not between historical periods. These were seen either in terms of equal value or in terms of rises and declines. However, Vasari's *Lives* (1550) mentions the progress of art under the early Greeks and its subsequent decline under the later Romans. In terms of the rise of art in relation to civic liberty, William Turnbull's *Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740) may have influenced Winckelmann. See Alex Potts, *Winckelmann's Construction of History*, in: *Art History*, 5, 1982, pp. 377–407, esp. pp. 382–386.

<sup>26</sup> Comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, 7 vols., Paris 1752–1767. In Volume I (ix) de Caylus, writing in relation to the arts, states that »You see them formed in Egypt with all the character of grandeur, from there pass to Etruria, where they acquired parts of details, but at the expense of this same grandeur; then transported to Greece, where knowledge joined to the most noble elegance, led them to their greatest perfection«. Quoted in A. Potts, *The Verbal and Visual in Winckelmann's Analysis of Style*, in: *Word & Image*, 6, 1990, pp. 226–240, esp. p. 231.

<sup>27</sup> In: Robin Middleton and David Watkin, *Neoclassical and 19th Century Architecture*, New York 1980, p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1615–1696): »einen der gelehrten Betrüger und Windmacher«, in: *Justi* (as note 5), vol. I, p. 346. Winckelmann was the eventual successor to Bellori's honorary position of *Antiquario di Roma*.

<sup>29</sup> »[...] aber niemand hat sich sozusagen zum Heiden gemacht, um in den Geist des Altertums einzudringen.



of Greece was Richard Dalton's *Museum Graecum et Aegypticum*, appearing in 1751. Travel to Greece was still fraught with difficulty if not danger and the publication of Julien-David Le Roy's provocative *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (1758, <sup>2</sup>1770) a work which came to play a pivotal role in the Greco-Roman controversies, would have to wait for another three years whereas the more accurate but less influential first volume of Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* (1762) suffered delays for a further seven.<sup>46</sup> Finally, in the Protestant Germany that was Winckelmann's first home, Greek itself was disparaged as a classical language.<sup>47</sup> Similar hindrances prevailed in Catholic countries, particularly Italy, where the Jesuits also neglected the teaching of Greek.<sup>48</sup> Only English universities continued to teach the ancient language and thus eighteenth-century difficulties associated with conducting archaeological or, properly, antiquarian studies were compounded by philological ones.

At the time of Winckelmann's writing, the relative obscurity in which antiquity still lay did serve a purpose for, as Joseph Levine has put it, »neoclassical sensibility triumphed in large part for lack of scholarship.«<sup>49</sup> It is an irony of history that the very scholarship with which Winckelmann hoped to ground his universalist aspirations sowed the seeds of its own demise. Nonetheless, he avoids neoclassical dogmatism. Whereas the *Gedanken* are a call to imitation directed towards the artist in developing a single, normative ideal, his second major and arguably greatest work, the *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764) is concerned with the historical development and reception of art. In the *Geschichte* he articulates the structural difference between the earlier sublime or »high« style of Greek sculpture and the succeeding »beautiful« style. While the beautiful denotes the highest achievement of the Greeks, Winckelmann relativizes his emphasis on imitation, accepting that even within Greek culture imitation led eventually to decline. Influenced by the growing importance his contemporaries assigned to the creative powers of the genius as well as the political thought of both Voltaire and Rousseau, Winckelmann's *Geschichte* focuses on the more complex historical relationship between the artist and his socio-political context.<sup>50</sup> Finally recognizing an unbridgeable gulf separating

contemporary and ancient culture, the Greece of the later Winckelmann slowly recedes into an inimitable, almost utopian, past. Ultimately it is neither as pagan

Winckelmann dagegen besitzt die Fehler und Vorzüge eines griechischen Kunstliebhabers, und man spürt in seinen Schriften den Kultus der Schönheit, wie es bei dem Volk existierte [...].« Madame de Staël, *Über Deutschland*, Berlin 1989, pp. 148f.

<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that the »word *nostalgia* appeared in French around the middle of the eighteenth century; it was derived from a Latin medical term (*nostalgia*) created in 1678 by the Swiss physician Hofer by combining the Greek words *nostos* (return) and *algos* (suffering) and modelled after other words ending in *-algia*, so as to translate the Swiss German word *Heimweh*, home-sickness, a sickness then prevalent amongst the Swiss living abroad, especially the mercenaries.« Jacques Taminiaux explains that nostalgia is not a state of depression or melancholy, but is indicative of a »lucid and thoughtful analysis of both past and present – an analysis that probes into the foundations of two modes of existence [and] shows this rupture or sundering as the very principle ruling over the current mode of existence«. Taminiaux, does not attribute this sense of profound rupture associated with nostalgia to Winckelmann who, by claiming that »Dresden will henceforth be the Athens of artists« believes in historical continuity. Lessing, Herder and Goethe are similarly excused from articulating a true nostalgia. First with Schiller who, according to Taminiaux, believes that the »features of the true state of [man's] nature are not revealed by the noble primitive, or savage, living in a Rousseauistic forest, but by the ancient Greek individual« does one encounter a true nostalgia, a true sense of exile. See J. Taminiaux (trans. by M. Gendre), *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment. The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, New York 1993, Chp. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Winckelmann/Nisbet (as note 2), p. 33. »Der einzige Weg für uns, groß, ja, wenn es möglich ist, unnachahmlich zu werden, ist die Nachahmung der Alten [...].« Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> This idea is borrowed by Winckelmann from the conservative French »ancient« La Bruyère. The appropriate paragraph is from the first chapter of *Die Charaktere*, quoted here in the German translation: »[...] man hat den dorischen, ionischen und korinthischen Stil wieder ins Leben gerufen: was nur noch in den Ruinen des alten Rom und Griechenland zu sehen war, ist modern geworden und tritt in unseren Hallen und Säulengängen wieder ins Licht. Ebenso können wir als Schriftsteller nicht anders zur Vollkommenheit gelangen und unter Umständen die Alten übertreffen, als indem wir sie nachahmen«. La Bruyère, (G. Hess trans. and ed.), *Die Charaktere oder die Sitten des Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1970, p. 9. For an excellent discussion of the issue of imitation see Herbert Dieckmann, *Die Wandlung des Nachahmungsbegriffs in der französischen Ästhetik des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in: id., *Studien zur Europäischen Aufklärung*, Munich 1974, pp. 275–311.

nor connoisseur but as historian that Winckelmann is given greatest credit by his successors.<sup>51</sup> At century's close, Schlegel summarized that the »systematic Winckelmann, who read all of the ancients like an author, saw everything in its totality, and focused all of his energy on the Greeks, through his perception of the absolute difference between the ancients and the moderns, laid the first foundations for a material theory of antiquity.«<sup>52</sup>

In time, however, Winckelmann came to be criticized for his sloppy philology and he would even come to be criticized for his poor history.<sup>53</sup> Later still, Jean Paul satirized the German penchant for imitating the noble simplicity of the Greeks as »relabeling our native poverty as foreign wealth«<sup>54</sup> while Novalis relativized the entire understanding of the ancients: »one is confused, if one believes that there were ancients. Only now does the antique begin to exist.«<sup>55</sup> Goethe insisted that »one learns nothing from him« but acknowledging his own profound debt to Winckelmann, added that »one becomes something«.<sup>56</sup> Later, Jakob Burckhardt insisted that: »The history of style [...] begins with Winckelmann, who was the first to distinguish between the periods of ancient art and to link the history of style with world history. It is only after him that art history became a branch of cultural history.«<sup>57</sup> By the close of the nineteenth century Walter Pater considered Winckelmann as not belonging to the eighteenth century at all, but as the »last fruit of the Renaissance.«<sup>58</sup> Most recently, Winckelmann's foundational status in the history of art has been called into question as the importance of other works such as Joachim von Sandrart's (1606–1688) *Teutsche Academie* are re-examined.<sup>59</sup> However, as Winckelmann first constructed his myth of the Greek ideal around the figure of the anguished Laocoon none of this mattered.<sup>60</sup> Nor did it matter that Winckelmann's *Gedancken* were published on the eve of his own departure, not for Greece, but for Rome where, overcome, he declared that »nothing compares with Rome!«<sup>61</sup> What mattered is that the die had been cast, that Winckelmann's elevation of Hellenic culture to a mythic ideal was to lead not only to a broader reflection on the relationship of geography and society to culture and history, but placed his vision on a collision course with another who idealized not the an-

cient Greeks, but the Romans: Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

If the discussion surrounding Winckelmann partakes of aesthetic, archaeological, cultural, philological, and

<sup>53</sup> Winckelmann, in his early reflections of the writing of history, rejected universal histories with their biographical tendencies. He was equally skeptical of political history; finally, history was to be of a philosophical and cultural nature. See M. Kay Flavell, Winckelmann and the German Enlightenment, in: *Modern Language Review*, 74, 1979, pp. 79–96, esp. p. 87.

<sup>54</sup> One is reminded of the lines (88–89) from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (1711): »Those RULES of old discovered, not devis'd, Are nature Still, but Nature methodiz'd«. One is equally reminded of England's own often ambivalent attitude towards Rome, as Pope's *Essay* closes on: »But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd, And kept unconquer'd and unciviliz'd; fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold, We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.« (lines 714–718).

<sup>55</sup> Winckelmann/Nisbet (as note 2), p. 38: »Das Studium der Natur muß also wenigstens ein längeren und mühsamerer Weg zur Kenntniß des vollkommenen Schönen seyn, als es das Studium der Antiquen ist [...]«. Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 37. Winckelmann preceeds this by attacking Bernini, declaring him to be »einer von denen gewesen, die den Griechen den Vorzug einer theils schönern Natur, theils Idealischen Schönheit ihrer Figuren streitig machen wollen. Er war ausserdem der Meynung, daß die Natur allen ihren theilen das erforderliche Schöne zu geben wisse; die Kunst bestehe darinn, es zu finden«. Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), pp. 36f. Winckelmann knew of Bernini's attitude towards the antique through Baldinucci's *Vita del Cavaliere Giovanni Lorenzo Bernino scultore, architetto e pittore*. He could not have known of the then unpublished diary kept by Paul Frérart de Chantelou of Bernini's stay in Paris in 1665, during which Bernini spoke to the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*. Bernini advocated that students not be allowed to work from nature directly, but only from plaster cast models of the works of the ancients. Nature itself, taken in the raw, was too small, weak and confused to provide the necessary nourishment to students of the arts.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*: »Die Nachahmung des Schönen der Natur ist entweder auf einen einzelnen Vorwurf gerichtet, oder sie sammet die Bemerkungen aus verschiedenen einzelnen und bringt sie in eins. Jenes heißt eine ähnliche Copie, ein Portrait machen [...] Dieses aber ist der Weg zum allgemeinen Schönen und zu Idealischen Bildern desselben; und derselbe ist es, den die Griechen genommen haben«. Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> The causal relationship between climate and culture was popularized by Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, but the idea was already apparent in the writings of Jean Bodin. This notion was also popular among early German enlightenment figures such as Nicholas H. Gundling and Jacob August Franckenstein. See Peter Hanns Reill, *The*



historical concerns operating in concert, then we are confronted with a similarly complex interweaving in the work and figure of Piranesi. Like Winckelmann, Piranesi relied less on literary sources than direct observation, visiting excavations and carefully examining archaeological finds before committing his observations to print. Illustrating these with an often theatrical staging and dramatic lighting of elements, Piranesi transformed seventeenth-century »theaters of nature« into eighteenth-century »theaters of history«; creating stirring tableaux of construction and destruction, rise and decline, growth and decay. Clearly, his drawings are more convincing than his arguments which, as John Wilton-Ely and others have noted, are often weak and contradictory.<sup>62</sup>

As related at the opening of this discussion, the Graeco-Roman polemics interwove issues of aesthetics, cultural identity and history. Disentangling these is not a simple affair. As we have seen, Winckelmann was largely responsible for dividing the ancient world into Roman and Greek poles and then differentiating the sublime from the beautiful in Greek art. But others were also subjecting Rome and the Romans to similar forms of differentiation. Republican was distinguished from Imperial Rome, the former loosely associated with their Etruscan forbears who, in turn, were linked back to the Greeks. And, as archaeological discovery and documentation continued apace in the lower portion of the peninsula, Italy itself came to be divided into northern Roman and southern Greek halves. With Horace in hand, the perceptions of early- and mid-century travelers to northern Italy differed profoundly from those later travelers who, such as Goethe, toured southern Italy with well-read copies of Homer.<sup>63</sup> In this regard, if we can think of Winckelmann's applying the structure of classical literary development to sculpture in terms of a »rhetoric of the image«,<sup>64</sup> then the differing perceptions of the Italian landscape equally inspired by literary references might well be understood as a »rhetoric of the landscape.«

With the physical landscape thus divided, the cultural landscape was equally subject to varying forms of appropriation. Despite Shaftesbury's enthusiastic reception of Greek art and aesthetics, the English considered Roman models of political and personal conduct as

more viable. Consequently, even the Glorious Revolution came to be identified as reestablishing a »republican« government with some describing republican

*German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism*, Berkeley 1975, p. 133–135.

<sup>38</sup> This separation of the ancient world had been growing since the early years of the century. It paralleled similar divisions between literature and sensual presence as well as between nature and civilization. This dichotomization followed the fundamental split between ancients and moderns that distinguished the culture of the early Enlightenment from that of the Renaissance, which had been more interested in establishing a sense of continuity with the ancient world. Winckelmann himself largely identified the universal with the Greek, an identification which led to Winckelmann's own denigration of not only Roman culture, but Egyptian. This was a source of irritation to Herder, who was far more differentiated in his understanding of cultural transmission and historical relativism. See Brian Vick, *Greek Origins and Organic Metaphors: Ideals of Cultural Autonomy in Neohumanistic Germany from Winckelmann to Curtius*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63, 2002, pp. 483–501, esp. pp. 484–488.

<sup>39</sup> It is important to distinguish between the construction of cultural and national identity, even though cultural configurations were often appropriated by nationalists to further their own ends.

<sup>40</sup> Friedrich Schlegel: »Jeder hat noch in den Alten gefunden, was er brauchte, oder wünschte; vorzüglich sich selbst.« Quoted in Ludwig Uhlig (ed.), *Griechenland als Ideal. Winckelmann und seine Rezeption in Deutschland*, Tübingen 1988, p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> In fact, one need not wait until Nietzsche for characterizations of the Greeks differing markedly from the Hellenic (and Apollonian) ideal. August Ludwig von Schölzer writes that »Die meisten Griechen waren, Macedonian und Syrakus abgerechnet, klein und ohnmächtig, und hatten eine unglückliche demokratische Regierungsform [...] Ihre Religion war albern, und ohne Wirkung auf das Herz. Ihr Naturrecht war zum Theil grausam und unmenschlich. Ihre Sitten gütigten den Flor der Kunst, das Gefühl der Schönheit, und die unnatürliche Wollust, gleich stark. [...] Und diese Unsterblichsten aller Griechen, die Athener, welch ein verächtlicher Pöbel waren sie schon zu Demosthenis Zeiten!« See A. L. v. Schölzer, *Vorstellung der Universal-Historie*, 2nd. ed. rev., Göttingen 1775, pp. 63–65. Quoted in: Reill (as note 37), p. 256. For a less detailed overview of varying German attitudes to the Greeks see H. Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature*, Cambridge/Mass. 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Jacob Spon and George Wheler, *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce, et du Levant, fait aux années 1675 & 1676*, 2 vols., Lyon 1678; Amsterdam 1679. (eng. trans.: 1682; ger. trans.: 1690).

<sup>43</sup> Winckelmann himself came to give an opinion on this famous forgery. See David Levine, *Dr. Woodward's Shield*, Berkeley 1977, esp. p. 283.

Romans as »good Whigs living two millennia before their time.«<sup>65</sup> Such correspondences between the virtuous British and ancient Romans had not been lost on Lord Burlington and his circle and, in terms of the English proclivity for things Roman, it may explain Piranesi's openness towards English students after the mid-1750's. Certainly it contributed to the popular reception of his work in England and the general reluctance of the English, even comparatively late in the century, to jump on the Greek bandwagon. In this regard William Chambers' comments on behalf of the Romans, intended for publication in 1768, are only the most vituperative: »a General Outcry of Artists and Connoisseurs [...] might with equal Success oppose a Hottentot and a Baboon to the Apollo and the Gladiator as set up the Grecian architecture against the Roman [...] It hath afforded Occasion of Laughter to every intelligent Architect to see with what Pomp the Grecian antiquities have lately been ushered into the World and what Encomiums have been lavished upon things that in Reality deserve little or no Notice [...]«.<sup>66</sup>

The English situation distinguished itself decisively from the French. Louis XIV modelled his rule on the Rome of Augustus, thus precluding France from identifying with earlier, republican institutions – at least until the century's end. It may therefore have also heightened French receptiveness to the Greek alternatives concerned with a search for origins and the primitive. This interest may be linked to a further reason. French historians such as Voltaire and Montesquieu replaced the older political histories of individuals with »philosophical histories« describing civilization's advance as a movement away from theology and towards rationality. Their efforts were directed more towards understanding the present rather than the past; hence they were less interested in non-literary sources than either the English or Italians, whose antiquarian societies flourished during this period. In France, as Edward Gibbon complained, »the learning and language of Greece and Rome were neglected by a philosophic age. The guardian of those studies, the Academy of Inscriptions, was degraded to the lowest rank among the three royal societies.«<sup>67</sup> This partly explains why in France literary theory continued to play such an influential rôle in the formation of taste. Winckelmann's

greatest service may lie in his synthesizing French literary theory with a keen interest in non-literary sources just as it may be Piranesi's to have synthesized

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in M. Kay Flavell, Winckelmann and the German Enlightenment, in: *Modern Language Review*, 74, 1979, pp. 79–96, esp. p. 89.

<sup>45</sup> Comte de Caylus (as note 26); Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, Paris 1719. In 1745 and in 1753 the Comte de Caylus held a series of lectures on Pliny's discussion of the arts from the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris in which he drew analogies between the rise of certain »mainière« and that of the period just prior to and including the High Renaissance. The same topic was addressed again in a publication of 1759. Potts identifies this as possibly having been helpful to Winckelmann in organizing his own ideas of stylistic development in his later *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*. See A. Potts, Winckelmann's Construction of History, in: *Art History*, 5, 1982, pp. 377–407, esp. pp. 394f.

<sup>46</sup> Julien-David Le Roy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce: considérées du côté de l'histoire et du côté de l'architecture*, Paris 1758; James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, London 1762–1830. The first volume appeared in 1762 and was a general disappointment – even to Winckelmann. Subsequent volumes appeared much later. For a general history of the reception of Greek architecture as the basis for the Greek Revival see Dora Wiebenson, *Sources of Greek Revival Architecture*, London 1969.

<sup>47</sup> To the extent that Greek was employed, it was used for exegetical purposes. As a consequence the little Greek that was used was the Greek of the Gospels, which differed markedly from Attic Greek. The general disparagement of the language began to take a turn for the better when Johann Matthias Gesner, friend to J. S. Bach, became Rector of the Thomasschule in Leipzig (1729–33; after which he went to Göttingen). Leipzig itself was nicknamed the »Athens on the Pleisse.« Conditions were somewhat better in France as the authority of Boileau legitimated serious scholarship and the use of original Greek texts. It is also worth noting that Claude Perrault translated Vitruvius because, as a doctor, he had a working knowledge of Greek. In England, the language was more widespread than on the continent. In general though, Greek was rapidly disappearing. It has been noted that between 1525 and 1606 sixteen editions of Homer appeared whereas between 1606 and 1759 there was only one. See in particular Gilbert Bagnani, Winckelmann and the Second Renaissance, 1755–1955, in: *American Journal of Archaeology*, 59, 1955, pp. 107–118.

<sup>48</sup> In the early years of the eighteenth century, Greek was taught intermittently, poorly or not at all in Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Padua, Bologna and Turin. See Arnaldo Momigliano, Mabillon's Italian Disciples, in: id., *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, Oxford 1977, p. 280.

<sup>49</sup> Levine (as note 43), p. 287.



his own unfettered interest in the non-literary with a poetic vision often understood as deriving from Vichian thought.

Two aspects of Piranesi's work will be discussed. The first will examine the figure of the primitive hut in relation to Laugier and the issue of imitation and history. The second will examine Piranesi's reconstructions of Rome to illustrate his interests in *capricci* and what might be termed the historical imaginary. Discernible throughout these examples is a sustained assault by Piranesi on not only the Greeks but also on the historical reception of Vitruvius. It is therefore possible to note a fundamental irony of the Graeco-Roman controversies paralleling that of the *Querelle*: Winckelmann, the Graecophile ancient, implicitly supports the Roman Vitruvian tradition, whereas Piranesi, the »modern« Italophile, does not.

#### *The Tomb of the Scipios and the Visualization of History*

Piranesi's most aggressive attacks on Laugier and the *Rigoristi* appeared in his later *Parere sù l'Architettura* (1765), and it is generally agreed that he was not overtly theoretically active until the publication of the *Della Magnificenza* (1761). Nevertheless there is evidence from Piranesi's earlier *Le Antichità Romane* (1756), the first volume of which was published a year before receiving his Honorary Fellowship in London's Society of Antiquaries, that he was already gearing for a fight.<sup>68</sup> In the preface to the first of these four volumes – collectively considered as a »landmark in the history of classical archaeology« – Piranesi outlined the fields of enquiry he considered proper for a contemporary architect, which included a comprehensive knowledge of Roman antiquities.<sup>69</sup> The second volume (fig. 2) contains the remarkable *Veduta di un Sepolcro creduto de' Scipioni* (fig. 3) an engraving discussed by Shelley Perlove.<sup>70</sup> Tombs had long been a feature of Piranesi's work and they are often amongst the most striking of his engravings, as can be seen from the *Veduta degli Avanzi di alcune Camere sepolcrali* (fig. 4), also from the second volume of *Le Antichità* or the *Sepolcro de' tre fratelli Curazj in Albano* (fig. 5) and the *Veduta di un gran Masso, Avanzo del Sepolcro della Famiglia de' Metelli sulla Via Appia* (fig. 6), both from the third



2. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. II, Title Page ... Tomo secondo contenente gli avanzi de' monumenti sepolcrali di Roma e dell'agro romano, 1756

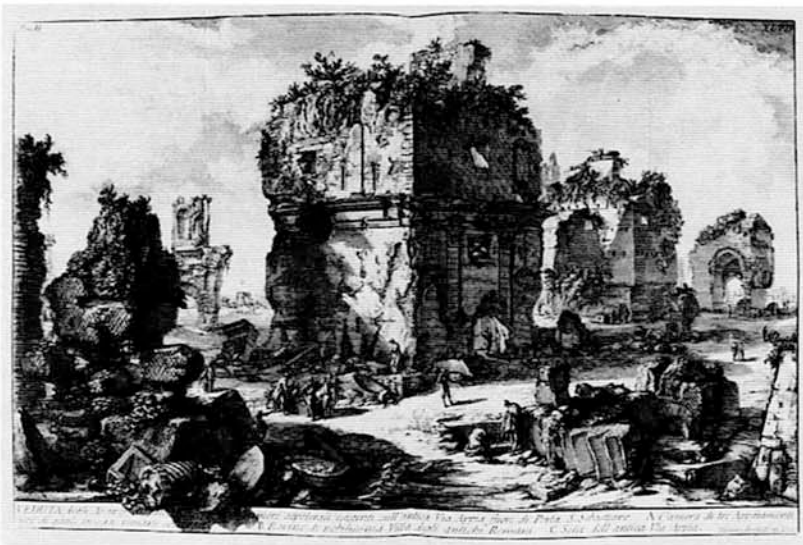
<sup>68</sup> Rousseau's *Du Contrat social; ou, principes du droit politique*, Amsterdam 1762, appeared two years earlier.

<sup>69</sup> Goethe, writing to the Herzog Carl August, expresses that: »Das wichtigste, woran ich nun mein Auge und meinen Geist übe sind die Style der verschiedenen Völker des Alterthums und die Epochen dieser Style in sich, wozu Winckelmanns Geschichte der Kunst ein treuer Freund ist«. The letter is written in Rome, dated 13 January 1787. Quoted in Jochen Schmidt, *Griechenland als Ideal und Utopie bei Winckelmann, Goethe und Hölderlin*, in: *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 28, 1993, pp. 94–110, esp. p. 100.

<sup>70</sup> »Der systematische Winckelmann, der alle Alten gleichsam wie einen Autor las, alles im ganzen sah, und seine gesamte Kraft auf die Griechen konzentrierte, legte durch die Wahrnehmung der absoluten Verschiedenheit des Antiken und des Modernen, den ersten Grund zu einer materialen Altertumslehre«. Quoted in Uhlig (as note 40), p. 153.



3. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. II, *Veduta di un Sepolcro creduto de' Scipioni ...*, 1756



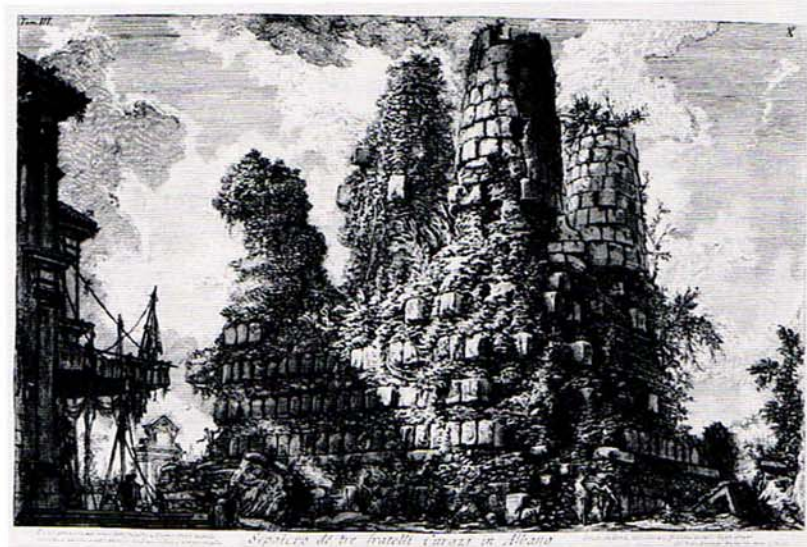
4. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. II, *Veduta degli Avanzi di alcune Camere sepolcrali ...*, 1756

volume. These all express certain formal similarities; a deep perspective moving off to the right supported by a framing element adjacent to the left-hand frame of the image. Furthermore, in both the *Sepolcro de'tre fratelli Curazj* and the *Sepolcro creduto de' Scipioni* the framing element is comprised of an inhabited residence. But it is with the *Tomb of the Scipios* that we already find evidence of Piranesi's use of visual imagery for rhetorical purposes in the service of the Graeco-Roman contro-

<sup>53</sup> »Beyond all bounds, historically false« (»über alle Maßen historisch falsch«) was Nietzsche's judgement of Winckelmann's (and Goethe's) work on the Greeks. This is not completely surprising as Nietzsche focused more on the Dionysian rather than the Apollonian aspects of Greek culture. Further, we can identify the distance between Winckelmann and Nietzsche from the latter's *Geburt der Tragödie*, which closes with »wieviel mußte dies Volk leiden, um so schön werden zu können«. Nonetheless, Max L. Baumer has examined the Dionysian interests of Winckelmann, particularly in light of his insistence on the



5. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. III, *Sepolcro de' tre fratelli Curazj in Albano*, 1756



6. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. III, *Veduta di un gran Masso, Avanzo del Sepolcro della Famiglia de' Metelli sulla Via Appia*, 1756



versies. Focusing her attention on the image of the hut standing upon the upper reaches of the tomb, Perlove notes that the »V« occupying the center of the image is »wholly illogical in terms of the development of the Greek Temple«.71 Though it might be argued that this »V« is a form of cross bracing, Perlove's conclusion that

highest beauty being attained only by the combination of the *edle Einfalt* with the notion of Parenthyrsos; excessiveness of emotion or unrestrained passion. This had its homoerotic strains as well, the mixture carrying over from the Apollonian and Bacchanalian into that of male and female, the hermaphrodite, and the *castrate*. See M. L. Baeumer, *Winckelmanns Formulierung der klassischen Schönheit*, in: *Monatsheft für deutschen Unterricht, deut-*

this is a rhetorical device intended to subvert the teachings of both Vitruvius and Laugier is convincing – Piranesi often enjoyed such visual barbs. Clearly, he was well aware of the issues surrounding the laws of nature versus the history of man, model versus process, imitation versus invention, and rules versus caprice in all of their particulars. These would have been known to him through his frequent contact with the architectural students at the Palazzo Mancini. However, in the context of this paper, I wish to return to this image to address another concern, and suggest that Piranesi's *Tomb of the Scipios* is not simply a visual prelude to the polemic concerning two types of architecture, but between two possible histories of architecture. If this is the case, what form of historical understanding does Piranesi offer and how might it compare with Winckelmann's?

Conjecture as to Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) influence on Piranesi has become commonplace. Trained as a Jesuit, Vico first rejected Aristotelianism for neoplatonism before turning to philology and etymology. This turn placed Vico at odds with Descartes' privileging of the rational and eternal truths of philosophy over history and language,<sup>72</sup> earning him a misleading reputation as being anti-Cartesian or even anti-Enlightenment.<sup>73</sup> Appointed Professor of Rhetoric in Naples (1698) and Royal Historiographer to Charles III (1734), he never visited Rome and, outside of Naples, was a relatively obscure figure. Alternately characterized as anachronistic or visionary, it is without question that Vico was deeply influenced by Baconian science. In his *New Science* (1724, <sup>2</sup>1730, <sup>3</sup>1744), Vico's masterpiece, science is ›revolutionized‹ by infusing it with a rhetorical logic as Vico revises Bacon's ›mental model of memory, imagination and reason [by] replacing reason with invention‹. Thus Vico insists on the triad of memory, imagination and invention as the foundation of his thought.<sup>74</sup> In Venetian circles his thought was mediated by the Franciscan Carlo Lodoli, a rigorist linked with Laugier's architectural theory and whose thinking was familiar to Piranesi. Lodoli is associated with Vico's autobiography and he attempted to secure the publication of the second edition of the *New Science* (1730) in Venice.<sup>75</sup> The publication did not materialize, but Vichian thought may have entered archi-

tectural theory in this manner.<sup>76</sup> Lodoli was acutely critical of Vitruvius' architectural history, insisting that ›if Vitruvius should have had a more lively and wide-

*sche Sprache und Literatur*, 65, 1973, pp. 61–75. On a further note, Schlegel had distinguished three elements in Sophoclean drama: the Apollonian, Dionysian and Minervan. See H. Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature*, Cambridge/Mass. 1964, p. 240, (footnote 34).

<sup>74</sup> »So stempelt man denn einheimische Armut zu ausländischem Reichtum.« Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, N. Miller (ed.), Munich 1963, p. 465.

<sup>75</sup> »Man irrt sehr wenn man glaubt, daß es Antiken giebt. Erst jetzt fängt die Antike an zu entstehen.« From the »Blüthenstaub« fragment: Novalis: R. Samuel (ed.), *Das philosophische Werk I*, 2 vols., Stuttgart 1960, p. 640. Quoted in Raimar Zons, »Das Schöne soll sein«, in: *Die Aktualität der Frühromantik*, E. Behler and J. Hörisch (eds.), Munich 1987, pp. 208–218, esp. p. 208.

<sup>76</sup> Goethe to Eckermann, 16. Februar 1827: »Man lernt nichts, wenn man ihn lieset, aber man wird etwas.«

<sup>77</sup> Jakob Burkhardt, quoted in: Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal. Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven 1994, p. 70.

<sup>78</sup> Walter Pater, *The Renaissance; Studies in Art and Poetry*, London 1877. From the *Preface*. Originally published in 1873 under the title *Studies in the history of the Renaissance*; the quote is from a later edition.

<sup>79</sup> See Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (as note 18); and id., *Before Winckelmann: Toward the Origins of the Historiography of Art*, in: *Knowledge, Science, and Literature in Early Modern Germany*, Chapel Hill 1996, pp. 71–89.

<sup>80</sup> The Laocoon, »discovered« in 1501, was described by Winckelmann thusly: »Laocoon war den Künstlern im alten Rom eben das, was er uns ist: des Polyclets Regel; eine vollkommene Regel der Kunst.« Winckelmann/Rehm (as note 2), p. 30.

<sup>81</sup> »Alles ist nichts gegen Rom! Ich glaubte, ich hätte alles vorher ausstudiert, und siehe, da ich hierher kam, sah ich, daß ich nichts wußte.« Winckelmann's enthusiasm for Rome contrasts markedly with Goethe's evident disappointment: »[...] es ist ein saures und trauriges Geschäft, das alte Rom aus dem neuen herauszuklauben, aber man muß es denn doch tun, und zuletzt einen unschätzbare Befriedigung hoffen. Man trifft Spuren einer Herrlichkeit und einer Zerstörung, die beide über unsere Begriffe gehen. Was die Barbaren stehenließen, haben die Baumeister des neuen Roms verwüestet.« J. F. v. Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, 5. November 1786.

<sup>82</sup> Wilton-Ely (as note 14), p. 530.

<sup>83</sup> For example in Goethe's letter on Sicily written to Herder (*Italienische Reise*, Neapel, 17. Mai, 1787): »Was den Homer betrifft, ist mir wie eine Decke von den Augen gefallen. Die Beschreibungen, die Gleichnisse etc. kommen uns poetisch vor und sind doch unsäglich natürlich, aber freilich mit einer Reinheit und Innigkeit gezeichnet, vor der man erschrickt. Selbst die sonderbarsten erlogenen Begebenheiten haben eine Natürlichkeit, die ich nie so ge-



ranging intelligence, he would have recognized that to compose his architectural history it would remain essential that he leave his retreat and visit [...] ancient Etruria, the realms of Naples and Sicily, no less than Egypt and Greece where people started to build in stone and brick, they never would have set out to imitate huts.<sup>77</sup> This position is clearly redolent of Vichian influence.

The importance attached to Naples, Sicily and especially Etruria had a particular appeal to early eighteenth-century scholars such as Vico and understanding architecture as an historical process of invention would certainly be attractive to Piranesi.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless there are important qualifications to consider before definitively linking Vico with Piranesi. As noted above, Piranesi (like Winckelmann) turned towards non-literary sources in his historical pursuits and as such he would be more closely related to the likes of Francesco Bianchini (1662–1727), than to Vico.<sup>79</sup> Known throughout Europe for his influential *Universal History proved with Monuments and engraved with Symbols of the Ancients* (1697), a book familiar to Winckelmann, Bianchini's insistence that the study of monuments was »appropriate for the spirit of our age« embodied the aspirations of Piranesi.<sup>80</sup> It was also the kind of work against which Vico's *New Science* was originally written.<sup>81</sup> A mathematician and astronomer, Bianchini (to whom we shall return again below) brought to his study of history the empirical approach of direct observation.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, the philologist Vico never lost faith in the veracity of language and texts. In this regard he was decidedly out-of-date.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore it has been noted his interpretations of Roman history demonstrating the »most fantastic disregard of all serious contemporary scholarship«.<sup>84</sup> Vico's obscurity was also at least partially self-imposed; resulting from his complete reliance on the written word, thus excluding visual information in a century fascinated with the power of visualization.<sup>85</sup> This contrasts sharply even with the work of his own associates, the antiquarians Egizio and Mazzochi, the latter of whom Winckelmann held in highest regard.<sup>86</sup> And still another difficulty of Vico's scholarship must be noted: his command of the Greek language was poor, his knowledge of Greek history tenuous. If Piranesi and Vico are to be linked, it is

neither through Vico's skill as an antiquarian nor his visualization of knowledge.

Central to Vico's thought is his belief that nature, created by God, cannot be known. In contrast, history,

fühlt habe als in der Nähe der beschriebenen Gegenstände. [...] Wenn was ich sage nicht neu ist, so hab' ich es doch bei neuem Anlaß recht lebhaft gefühlt. Nun ich alle diese Küsten und Vorgebirge [...] und das alles umgebende Meer mit so vielen Abwechslungen und Mannigfaltigkeiten im Geiste gegenwärtig habe, nun ist mir erst die Odyssee ein lebendiges Wort.« Further see Albert Meier, *Das Land zum Buch. Klassische Literatur und Italienwahrnehmung im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: K. Heitmann and T. Scamardi (eds.), *Deutsches Italienbild und italienisches Deutschlandbild im 18. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1993, pp. 26–36.

<sup>64</sup> See Alan Potts, *The Verbal and Visual in Winckelmann's Analysis of Style*, in: *Word & Image*, 6, 1990, pp. 226–240.

<sup>65</sup> Philip Ayers, *Classical Culture and the idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge 1997, p. 8f. »Gothic« models were alternately held in high esteem. See, for example, Pope's reference to the ancient Britons in opposition to Rome (as note 34).

<sup>66</sup> This excerpt of the full tirade was intended for publication in the second edition of Chamber's *Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* (1768). However, it was only included in the third edition (1791), long after the Graeco-Roman controversies had passed. It is interesting to note that even at this late date, Chambers had apparently not modified his opinion. See Lesley Lawrence, Stuart and Revett: *Their Literary and Architectural Careers*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 1938, pp. 128–146, esp. pp. 136f.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Momigliano (as note 8), p. 308. On the preceding page, Momigliano denotes Voltaire and Montesquieu as the »philosophic historians«.

<sup>68</sup> John Wilton-Ely explicitly identifies *Le Antichità Romane* as involving Piranesi »with his first polemical activity«. See Wilton-Ely (as note 14), p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> Wilton-Ely (as note 14), p. 9. See also the section on *Le Antichità Romane* in Corinna Höper's wonderful catalogue *Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Die Poetische Wahrheit; Radierungen*, Ostfildern/Ruit 1999, pp. 166–198.

<sup>70</sup> This tomb was erroneously thought by Piranesi to belong to the Scipioni. Their tomb had been discovered in 1614 but was then forgotten until its »rediscovery« by Francesco Piranesi in 1780. The tomb depicted was actually that of Priscilla, wife of T. Flavius Abascantus, scribe to the Emperor Domitian (AD 81–96). See Shelley K. Perlove, *Piranesi's Tomb of the Scipios of Le Antichità Romane* and Marc-Antoine Laugier's Primitive Hut, in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 113, 1989, pp. 115–120, esp. p. 116.

<sup>71</sup> Perlove (as note 70), p. 118. The »V« appears as an inverted echo of Charles Eisen's illustration of the primitive hut for the second edition (1755) of Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture*.

created by man, is accessible to knowledge. According to Vico the fundamental error made by previous attempts at historical recovery lay in applying contemporary standards of taste and behavior to past practices; a criticism that, as we have seen, underlay the *Querelle*. Wishing to rectify this in the *New Science*, a science of origins, Vico searches for traces of these origins in myth. As such, his emphasis on man's primitive beginnings would become influential in the Italian reception of the sublime.<sup>87</sup> Vico's interest is in recovering poetic wisdom which, close to the origins of human consciousness, he believes to be prior to philosophic wisdom. Mirroring earlier distinctions between ›natural‹ and ›artificial‹ poetry, Vico held philosophy to be the product of refinement and, as an activity, he considered it to have developed gradually; only slowly replacing the first, poetic language.<sup>88</sup> This critique of the pre-eminence of philosophy was applied not only to contemporary philosophers, but to ancient philosophers whose own descriptions of their forbears Vico also distrusted. He was particularly dismissive of ancient descriptions of a ›philosophical‹ Homer, favoring instead a vision of a ›poetical‹ Homer.

Despite his limited knowledge of Greek, Vico's attention may have been drawn to Homer by new hostilities amongst French factions of the *Querelle* surfacing during the decade of 1710–20. Prompting this virulent round of exchanges were two competing translations of the *Iliad*, each of which posed a central historical question: did Homer really exist or are the Homeric poems composed of fragments penned by various authors?<sup>89</sup> This juxtaposition of fragment and unity is the literary equivalent of the archaeological dig; its ultimate solution dependent on philological expertise that would only become available to later generations. Though he did not know French, these debates would have been known to Vico through Giuseppe Valletta and his renowned library.<sup>90</sup> Ultimately Vico rejected the notion of Homer as an individual, insisting that ›Homer was an idea or a heroic character of Grecian men insofar as they told their histories in song‹.<sup>91</sup> He believed the Homeric poems to mark the gradual transition of man, guided by Providence, from the barbaric to the heroic age. Whereas the ancients considered Homer to be a philosopher, Vico regarded him as a nat-

ural poet speaking directly in poetical characters. And, like all great artists, the originality of Homer lay in his direct imitation of nature and not models. Vico's ›The

<sup>72</sup> In Neapolitan salons and academies Vico had been drawn into the orbit of cartesianism, but came relatively early to reject Descartes' notion that non-mathematical knowledge was a contradiction in terms. Vico presented his first defense of the humanities in his *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* (1709; eng. trans. as *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, 1965). In this text that Vico defends the humanities while conceding their having fallen into decline; a condition which he attributes to the lack of proper methodology. In first seeking to rectify this situation, he included a chapter entitled ›The New Science is Attempted‹ in the two-volume *Dritto unviuersale* (1720–21, Universal Law). This became the basis of his seminal *New Science*. Regarding the knowledge and use of language, Vico criticized Descartes, who ›says that to know Latin is to know no more than Cicero's servant-maid‹. Quoted in Joseph Levine, Giambattista Vico and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52, 1991, pp. 55–80, esp. p. 66.

<sup>73</sup> I owe this insight to Professor Dalibor Veseley, Cambridge University, who makes the point that although Vico's concern was with history and myth, the manner in which he approached these issues as ›knowable‹ was very much in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Most likely it is this aspect of his work that appealed to Carlo Lodoli.

<sup>74</sup> See Catherine L. Hobbs, Vico, Rhetorical Topics, and Historical Thought, in: *Historical Reflections*, 22, 1996, pp. 559–586, esp. pp. 572 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns. The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge/Mass. 1980, p. 327 (footnote 7) writes that ›The project to publish a series of autobiographies, of which Vico's was in fact the only one to appear, seems to have been conceived of by Count Giovanartico di Porzia [...] in discussion with Lodoli‹. This appears to be slightly inaccurate. Gustavo Costa, citing Croce, attributes the origin of the idea to Leibniz, who suggested in a letter to Louis Bourguet (March 22, 1714) that ›scholars and scientists be asked to write down, for the benefit of their colleagues ›l'histoire de leur découvertes et le progrès par lesquels ils y sont arrivés‹. The idea was passed on the Antonio Conti and thence to Porzia. Lodoli had intended to write a dissertation on the subject of such autobiographies – an innovation at the time (and intended as something of a confessional). Vico's was the only autobiography to be published, appearing in Father Calogera's *Raccolta di opuscoli scientifici e filologici*, I, (1728). The *Raccolta* was intended as a contribution to the antiquarian movement. See Gustavo Costa, An Enduring Venetian Accomplishment: The Autobiography of G. B. Vico, in: *Italian Quarterly*, 21, 1980, pp. 45–54.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise. The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*, New York 1972 (reprint ed. Cambridge/Mass. 1981), p. 54. Rykwert is very explicit, writing that ›I have no doubt that Pira-



Discovery of the True Homer« occupies the central book of the second edition of the *New Science*, the edition which Lodoli had hoped to publish.

Precariously, Vico extended this schema to Roman culture and, specifically, to Roman law. The ancient Romans, recognizing that the Greeks excelled in philosophy, were proud of their accomplishments in jurisprudence. The ancient Twelve Tables, the body of Roman law considered as the foundation of the Republican virtue upon which Rome rose to world domination, were held by Vico to be an austere or »serious« form of poetry recited in the Roman Forum.<sup>92</sup> However much he stretched credulity by considering law a form of poetry, Vico's particular strength lay in his training in archaic Roman law. Vico followed a tradition that began with early Italian scholars who turned to philology in order to understand the »universalistic schemas of the traditional philosophy of law« in their original context.<sup>93</sup> In this regard, the historical issues raised by Vico and Italian legal scholars and those surfacing throughout the *Querelle* are very similar and someone like Piranesi would certainly have been intrigued with the notion of laws, or rules, being a form of poetry that needed to be understood not in contemporary terms, but in terms of their original context.

In relation to the Greeks, Homer and poetry there is yet another tradition that deserves mention. The Greeks themselves had been engaged in a quarrel which resulted in Plato banishing poetry from the *Republic*: »For if you grant admission to the honeyed Muse in lyric or epic, pleasure and pain will be lords of your city instead of law [...]. Let us, then, conclude our return to the topic of poetry and our apology, and affirm that we really had good grounds for dismissing her from our city, since such was her character. For reason constrained us. And let us further say to her, lest she condemn us for harshness and rusticity, that there is from old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry.« (*Republic*, 606–607)

Plato was not alone in his criticism; Heraclitus and Xenophanes had also criticized Homer; preferring instead the usefulness and benefits of natural philosophy to the »honeyed Muse«. But as Ernst Curtius pointed out long ago, the Greeks, not wishing to abandon Homer, compromised by interpreting poetical works

as allegory.<sup>94</sup> This established a tradition of textual interpretation that continued through the European Middle Ages; allegorical interpretation was only slowly

nesi had been familiar enough with Lodoli's ideas in his use« adding that the »Piranesian concept of *magnificenza* probably owes something to Lodoli«. In *The First Moderns*, which appeared later, Rykwert is more cautious. See Rykwert (as note 75), pp. 280ff. Whatever the relationship between Lodoli and Vico may have been, there was no widespread dissemination of Vichian thought in the eighteenth century – even within Italy. Enrico de Mas has summarized the situation thusly: »A writer who, because of certain obscurities and imprecisions, was far from popular in Italy or abroad, Vico failed to give rise to a school. Instead he has exerted a series of sporadic impacts [on the later authors] Cousin, Michelet, Coleridge, Sorel, Croce«. See Enrico de Mas, *Vico and Italian Thought*, in: G. Tagliacozzo and H. White (eds.), *Giambattista Vico. An International Symposium*, Baltimore 1969, p. 147–165, esp. p. 148. Despite persistent efforts by scholars to establish Vico's influence beyond Italy during the eighteenth century, there is little evidence in support of this. See George A. Wells, *Vico and Herder*, in: Tagliacozzo/White (as above), p. 93–102; Alain Pons, *Vico and French Thought*, in: Tagliacozzo/White (as above), p. 165–186; and René Wellek, *The Supposed Influence of Vico on England and Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, in: Tagliacozzo/White (as above), p. 215–24.

<sup>77</sup> From Lodoli's student, Andrea Memmo, *Elementi d'architettura Lodoliana; ossia, L'arte del fabbricare con solida scientifica e con eleganza non capricciosa*, 2 vols., Zara 1833–34, vol. I, pp. 292f. Quoted in Rykwert (as note 76), p. 50. Underscoring the issue at hand, Memmo adds that the »hut should not be accepted as a model by anyone who thinks of it as the first artifact to replace nature: all the less since a first invention is not usually the best.«

<sup>78</sup> It is worth noting that the original impetus given to studies of Etruria came from the Scottish Catholic Thomas Dempster († 1625), who taught in Bologna at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He collected literary and epigraphical information on Etruria, which was later combined with additional information on monuments and published in 1723. At this time it was well-received as Italians were looking for new sources of cultural identification. See Momigliano (as note 8), pp. 304f.

<sup>79</sup> Bianchini was the favorite student of Enrico Noris (1631–1704), a leading Italian scholar of his day who had connections to Jean Mabillon (1632–1707). Both Noris and Bianchini came from Verona, where they had a close circle of followers. After their separate departures for Rome, where they were both supported by the Curia, they and their circle maintained influence in Verona while receiving continued protection from the Republic of Venice; Piranesi's city of birth and home until his own departure for Rome.

<sup>80</sup> Francesco Bianchini, *L'istoria universale provata con monumenti e figurata con simboli degli antichi*, Rome 1697.

replaced by philological analysis. In his *Versuch einer Allegorie* (1766), Winckelmann addressed this issue: »Finally, as Wisdom became more human among the Greeks and sought to impart herself to many, she put away the veil under which it was hard to recognize her; she was still disguised, but no longer concealed, so that those who sought her and contemplated her were able to know her; and in this guise she appears in the famous poets, and Homer was her highest teacher [...]. His Iliad was meant to be a handbook for kings and rulers, and his Odyssey the same for domestic life, Achilles' wrath and Ulysses' adventures are merely the material of disguise. He transformed the observations of Wisdom upon human passions into sensible images and thus gave his ideas a body which he enlivened with delightful pictures.«<sup>95</sup>

Both Vico and Piranesi were as aware of the allegorical tradition as was Winckelmann. As noted above, Vico preferred the »poetical« to the »philosophical« Homer, but philosophy and poetry were both resolved within the allegorical tradition. However there was another concept related to this tradition: it was often held that poetry contained not only the secrets of ancient wisdom, but as Curtius has shown, also universal practical knowledge. Quintilian maintained that Homer was familiar with »all« the arts; later Melancthon held that the foundations of astronomy and philosophy were to be found in Homer's description of Achilles' shield. Even in the early years of the eighteenth century, the Englishman Anthony Collins had written that the *Iliad* was the »epitome of all arts and sciences.«<sup>96</sup> What is of central concern for our discussion is that an all-encompassing knowledge was demanded of the poet, and this demand is similar to that which Vitruvius required of the architect. In this tradition, very much alive at the beginning of the eighteenth century, poet and architect are distinguished only by degree and not by kind.<sup>97</sup>

Bearing all this in mind, we can return to the *Tomb of the Scipios*. Here Piranesi combined not only Bianchini's empirical interests in monuments as true to the »spirit of our age« but Vico's beliefs in the importance of burial rituals to social formation; a point emphasized in the *New Science*. Contrasted with the primitive hut, we might understand the tomb as juxtaposing the importance of burial with that of shelter; inverting Laugier's

insistence that man »wants to make a dwelling that protects but does not bury him.«<sup>98</sup> Perlove suggests that the contrasting figures of old and young might be un-

Winckelmann used the copy of the first edition in the Bibliothèque National, Ms. Fonds Allemand 68, fol. 193. See Elisabeth Schröter, Projekt einer Beschreibung der Altertümer, in: Thomas Gaetgens (ed.), *Johann Joachim Winckelmann 1717–1768*, Hamburg 1986, pp. 55–119, esp. p. 106 (footnote 46).

<sup>91</sup> See Harold S. Stone, *Vico's Cultural History. The Production and Transmission of Ideas in Naples 1685–1750*, Leiden 1997, p. 188f. Stone also points to another important distinction between Bianchini and Vico. The former was concerned Hebrew culture as the original source of all customs, language and religion. This belief was relatively widespread during the seventeenth century and was a focus of inquiry even by individuals such as Isaac Newton. Vico adamantly held to the notion that, if nothing else, men must have knowledge of history as they are themselves responsible for its creation. However, this criterion did not apply to the Hebrews because in receiving their laws directly from God, they were not responsible for making their own history. Therefore, it is not possible for us to have proper scientific knowledge of the Hebrews. See Stone (as above), p. 245.

<sup>92</sup> Momigliano has explicitly made this point, noting also that Jacob Spon was trained as a doctor as were Charles Patin and Charles Vaillant. To this list might be added Claude Perrault. See Momigliano (as note 8), p. 300.

<sup>93</sup> With characteristic aplomb, Momigliano writes that Vico »was isolated in his times partly because he was a greater thinker, but partly also because he was a worse scholar than his contemporaries. The antiquarian movement of the eighteenth century passed him by.« See Momigliano (as note 8), p. 305.

<sup>94</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, Vico's *Scienza Nuova*: Roman »Bestioni« and Roman »Eroi«, in: id., *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, Oxford 1977, pp. 253–276, esp. p. 263. Of concern is the relative merit of Catholic scholarship which under the Bollandists and the Maurists had turned away from arcane discussions concerned with sacred history (the Pre-Adamites and hieroglyphs) and towards the examination of real, particularly medieval, historical problems. As such, these groups had become a match for the more progressive Protestant groups. Vico partook of the new-found reputation of Catholic scholarship, but contributed nothing to its further advancement.

<sup>95</sup> Stone notes that »The Neapolitan writers who responded positively to Vico's work probably also impeded the works' broader reception. [...] Vico's ideas about rationality as an historical product were not unthinkable in the eighteenth century, but it was a marketing mistake to try to promote them through conservative clerics, antiquarians and their patronage networks.« See Stone (as note 81), pp. 264f. Remy Saisselin is even more critical, noting that in 1750 Vico had even been forgotten in Naples. Quoting



derstood in terms of historical cycles: the younger figure on the right ascending the spiral of history bathed in sunlight while the older figure on the left, clothed in shadow, is nearing the end of a rickety and direct decline. We might add that this shadowy figure is descending from a private dwelling, which serves to give a sense of scale to the tomb, but may also denote the distinction between private and public. By extension this would imply that the individual, no matter how perfected in body and spirit (as per Winckelmann's ideal), is always subject to decline whereas the social body, even within the framework of a cyclical history, has a much greater resilience and longevity.<sup>99</sup> In the center of the etching there is an image of a child held aloft, which Perlove identifies as the symbol of the rejuvenation that Piranesi, like Vico, held open for Italian culture.<sup>100</sup> The child, however, is also important for another reason. Vico insists that the arts originated before philosophy, writing that »children have to a very great degree the skill of imitation [...] which demonstrates that in the childhood of the world, all peoples were the people of poetry« adding that »this is because poetry is nothing other than imitation. It therefore follows, that all the arts, those that serve necessity, utility and comfort [...] arose in the centuries of poetry.«<sup>101</sup> Bound neither by rules and natural processes, as Laugier would have it, nor geographic and climatic location as Winckelmann would insist, Vico and Piranesi held that »all peoples« were, in terms of their childlike imaginations, »people of poetry«. Therefore it can be argued that the real dialectic in this etching is not between Roman and Greek, nor tomb and hut, nor burial and shelter. Rather, it is between the child, that is the imagination, and that which the imagination is capable of achieving. Unfettered by convention, it is the imagination alone that can envision and realize the monumental undertaking of Roman architecture. In this etching, convention is subordinated to imagination as imagination is bound to periodic renewal through the cyclical course of history.

In summary, imitation is not just an artistic concern; it marks the point of transition from man's natural state to one in which he consciously shapes his environment. In other words, the ability to imitate marks the beginning of history. Vico therefore conceived of early literary records as reflecting neither as cryptograms of di-

vine knowledge nor as factual history, but as the products of an unbridled imagination; as the »poetic, irrational, even beastly elements of primitive fantasy,«

Franco Venturi, Saisselin notes that Vico's death in 1744 was »marked by a painful, embarrassed silence, the silence that accompanies the death of those who have outlived their usefulness«. See R. Saisselin, *Vichian Architecture*, in: *The Eighteenth Century, Theory and Interpretation*, 26, 1985, pp. 176–181, esp. p. 180.

<sup>86</sup> »Wer sich jedoch aus diesem allgegenwärtigen Dämon Neapler Salons einen Begriff vom dortigen Gelehrtentypus hätte machen wolle, den würde ein Besuch bei dem Nestor dortiger Philologie über seine Voreiligkeit belehrt haben. Die ward der greise Kanonikus Alexius Symmachus Mazzochi (1684–1771), der größte Grieche der Halbinsel, berühmter dort (nach Barthélemy) als Newton zu seiner Zeit in England.« Justi (as note 5), vol. II, p. 249. Mazzocchi's and Egizio's principle publications include: Matteo Egizio, *Serie dell'imperadori romani*, Napoli 1713 (1715). Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi, *In Mutilum Campani Amphitheatri titulum aliasque nonnullas Companas inscriptiones commentarius*, Napoli 1727. Mazzocchi was also involved in publications concerning the antiquities discovered at Herculaneum. Stone (as note 81), pp. 258–261.

<sup>87</sup> See Gustavo Costa, Melchiorre Cesarotti, Vico and the Sublime, in: *Italica*, 58, 1981, pp. 3–15. Costa maintains that Cesarotti, who translated the works of Macpherson and Gray, »provoked a revolution in Italian taste« was strongly influenced by Vico's primitivist theories. Further, Costa is inclined to believe that Vichian thought substantially influenced mainstream eighteenth-century primitivism, citing Cesarotti's insistence that Vico influenced Antoine Court de Gébelin's *Monde primitif*, 9 vols., Paris 1773–1782.

<sup>88</sup> Allan Megill relates this distinction as surfacing in the works of Augustin Clamet (1672–1757) and Claude Fleury (1640–1723); each of whom published works on Hebrew poetry. Augustin Clamet, *Dissertation sur la poésie des anciens Hébreux*, 1708 and *Dissertation sur la musique des Anciens, & en particulier des Hébreux*, 1713; Claude Fleury, *Discours sur la poésie en général & sur celle des Hébreux en particulier*, 1713. See Allan Megill, *Aesthetic Theory and Historical Consciousness in the Eighteenth Century*, in: *History and Theory. Studies in the Philosophy of History*, 17, 1978, pp. 29–62, esp. pp. 40f.

<sup>89</sup> The leading »ancient« in this round of exchange was Mme. Anne Le Fèvre Dacier. In 1699 she had already published a translation of the *Odyssey*. In 1710, as Boileau was dying, she prepared the publication of *L'Iliade d'Homère traduit en français avec des remarques de Madame Dacier*, 3 vols., Paris 1711. The modern's response was Antoine Houdar de La Motte's *L'Iliade avec un discours sur Homère*, Paris 1714. This was a completed »updated« version, deleting all that which he deemed to be either offensive or tedious to eighteenth-century taste. In his preface he had also stated that many commentators believe that

the historical stage in which language itself was created. Of course, this is the aspect of Vichian thought that would come to fascinate, if not Winckelmann, then Herder.

#### *The Archaeological Fragment and the Capriccio*

Piranesi, however, could and did go one step further than Winckelmann. Joseph Rykwert has suggested that Piranesi's intentions were »insidious«, that in a »sense the whole output of *Vedute*, *Magnificenza*, and *Carceri* is a vast *memento mori* for a greatness which once was and perhaps shall never be again, cannot be again.«<sup>102</sup> This judgement is overly harsh and unnecessarily pessimistic. By positioning himself within the Roman-Italian tradition, Piranesi claimed for Rome (as well as himself) an historical continuity in which his own creative powers would render manifest a historical unity that the isolated archaeological fragment could not. This may be a mark of an architect's *hubris*, but the alternative, accepting the past as irretrievably lost, simply does not correspond to Piranesi's programmatic polemics. These, as Richard Wendorf has recently written, must be considered as part of Piranesi's »lifelong attempt to inscribe order – legibility – on what remained of the Roman past.«<sup>103</sup> It is with this in mind that his »invention et capricci« can be understood: the former term denoting the technical audacity of the inventions depicted whereas the *capriccio* denotes not whimsical fancy but, as in the *Tomb of the Scipios*, the power necessary to imagine, create and ultimately reconstruct such edifices.

Shortly after the first battles of the *Querelle* had subsided, the French architectural theorist Augustin-Charles D'Aviler defined the *capriccio* as a »composition proceeding without any of the customary rules of architecture, that is of singular and novel taste«; a criticism directed in predictably French terms against the Roman Baroque of Borromini and »those other architects who are only concerned with distinguishing themselves from the others.«<sup>104</sup> D'Aviler would have been similarly critical of Piranesi's compositions, but today's scholarship adopts at least two further positions towards the *capriccio* and its relationship to architectural canon and history. The first considers the *capriccio* as demonstrating resistance to the rules of convention

and underscoring the imaginative freedom of the architect.<sup>105</sup> The second argues diametrically opposite: by confining such imaginative activity to the *capriccio*, the

Homer did not really exist. Taken together, this prompted a scathing reply by Dacier entitled *Des causes de la corruption du goût*, Paris 1714, in turn prompting a three volume response by Le Motte entitled *Réflexions sur la critique*, Paris 1715. These, and the other peripheral writing published by followers of both camps, made this the most prolific period of the *Querelle*. See Joan Dejean, *Ancients against Moderns. Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle*, Chicago 1997, pp. 97–103.

<sup>90</sup> The library had attracted the likes of Gilbert Burnet and Mabillon. See Stone (as note 81), p. 39.

<sup>91</sup> Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. from the third edition by T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fisch, Ithaca/NY 1970: para. 873. Quoted in Michael Steinberg, *The Twelve Tables and their Origin: An Eighteenth-Century Debate*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 43, 1982, pp. 379–396, see footnote 183, p. 383.

<sup>92</sup> Momigliano (as note 84), p. 264. For an excellent introduction to the issue of the Twelve Tables see Steinberg, pp. 379–383. Steinberg relates the tradition handed down by Livy and Dionysius Halicarnassus that held that the Roman's had acquired the fundamentals of their legal system from the Greeks, synthesizing this with their own customs to produce the Twelve Tables erected in the Roman Forum. This tradition held until the eighteenth century when Vico began to attack it. The difficult for Vico lay in accepting the Greek origins of the laws. In doing so, Vico offered a novel argument based on his notion of the »course the nations run«: every nation, during the course of its cultural development, must pass through the successive stages of the age of gods, the age of heroes and the age of men. Steinberg summarizes the argument thusly: »The Twelve Tables belong to the second, or heroic, age of Rome. Athens, however, had by this time entered the third stage, that of civil or human law. And Vico held that it was impossible for the people of a poetic, heroic age to comprehend, let alone accept, the rational and philosophical law of those in the age of men. Indeed, incapable as they were of »truth and natural equity«, the heroic gentes of latium lacked the powers of thought required to create any code at all.« It is in this regard that Vico can be understood as having rejected the existence of the Twelve Tables as a legal code; considering them instead as a »serious poem« presenting juridical relationships in the guise of fables. Having reached this conclusion, Vico also rejected the Roman tradition itself, insisting that the scholars of the late Roman Republic had »read their recondite, individual, discursive wisdom into the laws and poetry of the »divine« and »heroic« ages, whose wisdom was in fact common, collective, and poetic«. An analogous line of reasoning led Vico to reject the existence of Homer as an individual.

<sup>93</sup> Megill (as note 88), pp. 56f.

<sup>94</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin*

architect implicitly endorses the overarching dominance of convention in all primary forms of artistic production. As Werner Busch has succinctly put it: »*capriccio* as a *capriccio* is not a violation of existing norms«, adding that the »*capriccio* is not ruled out of the system of art theory, it is integrated into the [lower] end of the scale« of comparative theoretical values.<sup>106</sup> If this serves as a guideline, Piranesi presents us with an exception. By 1761, the start of his active theoretical work, he increases the scale of his drawings far beyond the diminutive norm for *capricci* and, in the *Carceri*, deletes the very term »*capricci*« from the revised second edition. This development is interpreted as seminal: the *capriccio* is no longer just a *capriccio*.<sup>107</sup> For Piranesi the *capriccio* performs another function: it becomes a tool of historical reclamation.

In order to explicate this relationship it is best to briefly return to Francesco Bianchini, whose approach to solving problems of history we have earlier distinguished from the work of Vico. Much like the sacred histories to which Vico objected, the *Universal History* begins with the Creation. However, Bianchini is centrally concerned with the history of Rome, although his focus is more on the Christian than the ancient city.<sup>108</sup> For our understanding of his influence on Piranesi, Bianchini's subject matter is of lesser importance than his granting the imagination, and the *capriccio*, a central rôle in historical comprehension. Accepting an Aristotelian philosophy of mind in which cognition is comprised of the imagination, memory, and reason (the latter of which Vico replaces with invention), Bianchini holds that the imagination is fueled by either sensory impressions or images. Once primed, the imagination sorts and orders these fragmentary sensory and visual impressions, synthesizing them into a mental »compendium«. Reason, bound to language and dependent on verbal information, is capable of more precise differentiation than the imagination. Mediating between the visual and the verbal is memory; it allows reason to act upon the imagination. It is in the exercise of this mediating role that information is committed to memory. For Bianchini, the *Universal History* must provide for both the imagination and reason, and he refers to his text as a »compendio« both in terms of the »scope of its universal history and as well as to images, both the

mental images created by fantasy, and the illustrations he composed to illustrate his history.«<sup>109</sup> Accompanied by an explicatory text, the antiquarian fragment is dis-

*Middle Ages*, Princeton 1953, pp. 203 f. Originally published as *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern 1948.

<sup>95</sup> J. J. Winckelmann, *Versuch einer Allegorie*, (1766) here from *Kleine Schriften und Briefe*, Weimar 1960, p. 182. »Endlich da unter den Griechen die Weisheit anfang menschlicher zu werden und sich mehreren mitteilen wollte, tat sie die Decke hinweg, unter welcher sie schwer zu erkennen war, sie blieb aber verkleidet, doch ohne Verhüllung, so daß sie denen, welche sie suchten und betrachteten, kenntlich war, und in dieser Gestalt erscheint sie bei denn bekannten Dichtern, und Homer war ihr höchste Lehrer [...] Seine Ilias sollte ein Lehrbuch für Könige und Regenten, und seine Odyssee ebendasselbe im häuslichen Leben sein; der Zorn des Achilles und die Abenteuer des Ulysses sind nur das Gewebe zur Entkleidung. Er verwandelte in sinnliche Bilder die Betrachtungen der Weisheit über die menschlichen Leidenschaften und gab dadurch seinen Begriffen gleichsam einen Körper, welchen er durch reizende Bilder belebte.« English trans. quoted in Curtius (as note 94), p. 205.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Curtius (as note 94), p. 206.

<sup>97</sup> In his essays on *Paradise Lost* Addison relates »Milton seems ambitious of letting us know, by his excursions on free will and predestination, and his many glances on history, astronomy, geography, and the like, as well as by the terms and phrases he sometimes makes use of, that he was acquainted with the whole circle of arts and sciences.« *Spectator*, No. 297, 9. February, 1712.

<sup>98</sup> Laugier (as note 11), pp. 11 f.

<sup>99</sup> If this interpretation of public versus private is correct, then it follows that the central group in the etching, depicting two adults and a small child, may be interpreted as denoting the family in Rousseauian terms as the archetype of social organization.

<sup>100</sup> Perlove (as note 70), pp. 118 f. Perlove completes her identification of the figures distributed throughout the etching, explaining that the figures on the top represent »poetic wisdom based on the motions and imagination« while the antiquarians and guides at the bottom represent »ocult wisdom grounded in reason and philosophy«.

<sup>101</sup> Giambattista Vico, *Scienza nuova*, 1774, vol. I, p. 90. Quoted in W. Tatarkiewicz, *Geschichte der Ästhetik*, 3 vols., Basel 1987, vol. III, p. 438 (originally published as *Historia Estetyki*, Warsaw 1967).

<sup>102</sup> Rykwert (as note 76), p. 55. Seymore Howard more accurately refers to one of Piranesi's later engravings as a »memento mori metaphorically suggesting the lure and lessons of regenerative antiquarianism« while also noting, in relation to a discussion on Winckelmann, the »changes in the practice of restoration – from the liberties taken with antiquities at the beginning of the century to a genuine reverence for the fragment at its close«. See Seymore Howard, Albani, Winckelmann, and Cavaceppi: The



played not according to type (as in the later work of Montfaucon and de Caylus) but is assembled into a pastiche intended to prod an imaginative act of historical reconstruction. Thus is it possible to move from a simple chronology of individual and unrelated events to a history concerned with scientific and cultural development. In organizing this information, Bianchini characterizes the historian as an architect and history as a city »understood not only by its plan, its buildings, but also its governing institutions, and by implication, its people and their customs.«<sup>110</sup> Far from being encyclopedic or totalizing, Bianchini deploys representative fragments for his images; encouraging his readers to turn to other texts, collections and sites, thereby granting them their own interpretative, and imaginative, access to historical reconstruction. Perhaps »universal history« can be understood not as a thing of the past, but as history subject to continual interpretation by an ongoing present.

Bianchini was the Superintendent of Roman Antiquities,<sup>111</sup> a position passed on to Ridolfino Venuti (1705–1763), Piranesi's senior and rival, before passing on to Winckelmann. Venuti assisted Francesco's nephew Giuseppe Bianchini in finishing the *Universal History*; only the first volume was substantially complete when it was first published in 1697, the completed version finally appearing in an altered form late in 1747. Piranesi, like Winckelmann, was familiar with Bianchini's work and the *Universal History* may have been in the library of Piranesi's early patron Nicola Giobbe (1705–1748), a source to which he had easy access.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, Piranesi incorporated images from another of Bianchini's publications, the *Camera ed iscrizioni sepolcrali de' Liberti, Servi, ed Ufficiali della Casa di Augusto scoperte nella Via Appia* (1727) into his own volume of a similar title.<sup>113</sup> Importantly, Piranesi's four *Grotteschi*,<sup>114</sup> suggested by Maurizio Calvesi as illustrating Vico's four ages of man,<sup>115</sup> is convincingly linked by Susan Dixon to the *Universal History*.<sup>116</sup> However, the most remarkable correspondence between the thought of Bianchini and Piranesi's work as both architect and historian is the *Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*.

### *The Campo Marzio and the Archaeological Sublime*

The Campo Marzio, a truly remarkable work has been described by Norbert Miller as the »last apotheosis of

Transition from Amateur to Professional Antiquarianism, in: *Journal of the History of Collections*, 4, 1992, pp. 27–38, esp. pp. 31 f.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Wendorf, Piranesi's Double Ruin, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34, 2001, pp. 161–180, esp. p. 162.

<sup>104</sup> Augustin-Charles D'Aviler, *Cours d'architecture qui comprend les ordres de Vignole*, 2 vols., Paris 1691, vol. II, p. 637. Quoted in Werner Busch, Piranesi's »Carceri« und der Capriccio-Begriff im 18. Jahrhundert, in: *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, 39, Cologne 1977, pp. 209–224, esp. p. 222.

<sup>105</sup> For instance, Lucrezia Hartmann argues that *capricci* are »Zeugnisse der künstlerischen Freiheit und zugleich den Widerstandes gegen die dominierende Kunsttheorie«. See L. Hartmann, *Capriccio – Bild und Begriff*, Zürich 1973.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Busch (as note 104), pp. 221 f.

<sup>107</sup> Busch suggests that at this juncture in the work of Piranesi the *capriccio* assumes the moralizing role of an »architecture parlante« that reached final maturity with the work of the »revolutionary architects«. Busch (as note 104), pp. 222 f.

<sup>108</sup> Momigliano (as note 48), p. 291. In this regard Bianchini is faithful to Mabillon's influence.

<sup>109</sup> Susan M. Dixon, Piranesi and Francesco Bianchini: *Capricci* in the Service of Pre-Scientific Archaeology, in: *Art History*, 22, 1999, pp. 184–213, esp. p. 211 (footnote 50). The pages 194–196 in Dixon's article are especially helpful in understanding the rôle of images in Bianchini's philosophy of mind and philosophy of history.

<sup>110</sup> Dixon (as note 109), p. 193.

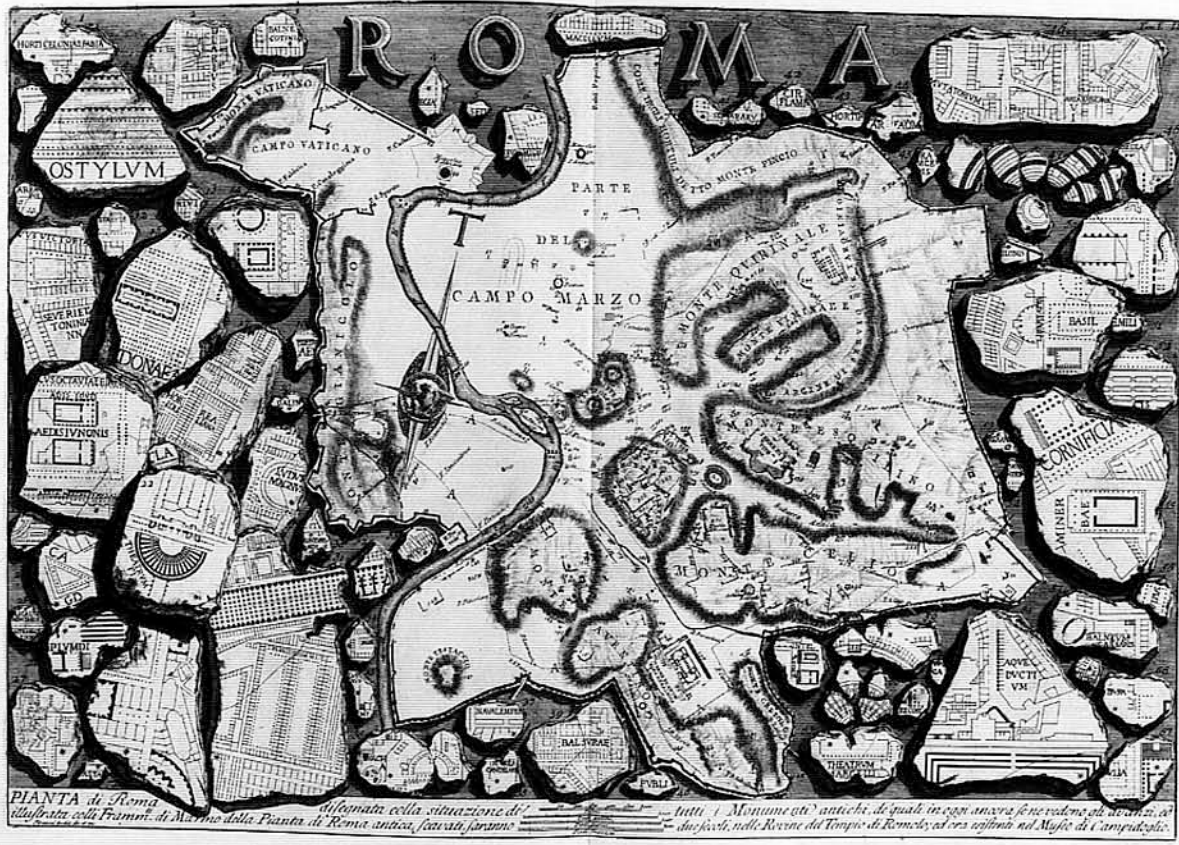
<sup>111</sup> A dedicated archaeological discoverer, Bianchini was considered a »Märtyrer der Antiquität«, his death resulting from an excavation accident on the Palatine Hill. Related by J. J. Volkmann, *Historische-Kritische Nachrichten von Italien*, Leipzig 1770, p. 581. Quoted in Schröter (as note 80), p. 103 (footnote 19).

<sup>112</sup> Dixon (as note 109), p. 192.

<sup>113</sup> Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Camere sepolcrali degli Antichi Romani le quali esistono dentro e fuori di Roma*. The date of the engravings remains uncertain and is disputed. There is an edition in the John Soane Museum bound together with other engravings, but the title page has no date. Norbert Miller argues that it must have appeared after the *Della Magnificenza* (1761) as a preparatory work intended to document all of the major burial monuments in the area surrounding Rome. See Miller 1978 (as note 15), p. 158. Dixon cites a date of »c. 1750«; (as note 109), p. 210 (note 30).

<sup>114</sup> Sometimes entitled the *Capricci*, they date from late 1747 or early 1748, after his return to Rome. See Andrew Robison, *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: The Early Architectural Fantasies. A Catalogue Raisonné of the Engravings*, Chicago 1986.

<sup>115</sup> Maurice Calvesio, *Nota ai grotteschi o capricci di Piranesi*,



7. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol. I, *Pianta di Roma* ..., 1756

the Baroque»,<sup>117</sup> while Wilton-Ely identifies it as »not only an artistic credo but a polemical response to the now growing influence of Winckelmann«.<sup>118</sup> Indulging in a polemic of his own, Manfredo Tafuri refers to it as a »triumph of the fragment«; a »dissolution of form« in which the dissolution »touches both history [...] and the very concept of the city«.<sup>119</sup> Recently, Marcel Baumgartner linked the *Campo Marzio* with the first volume of *Le Antichità Romane*, specifically with Piranesi's engraving of the *Pianta di Roma disegnata colla situazione di tutti i Monumenti antichi, de' quali in oggi ancora se ne vedono gli avanzi* (fig. 7), praising Piranesi's work as the »summation of all the scientific research done on the ruins of the Roman city since the start of the sixteenth century« while carefully demonstrating Piranesi's interest in archaeological accuracy.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, from its very appearance the *Campo Marzio* (fig. 8) seeks to provoke: rejecting Vitruvian notions of

in: Anna Lo Bianco (ed.), *Piranesi e la cultura antiquaria: gli antecedenti e il contesto*, Rome 1985, pp. 125–140.

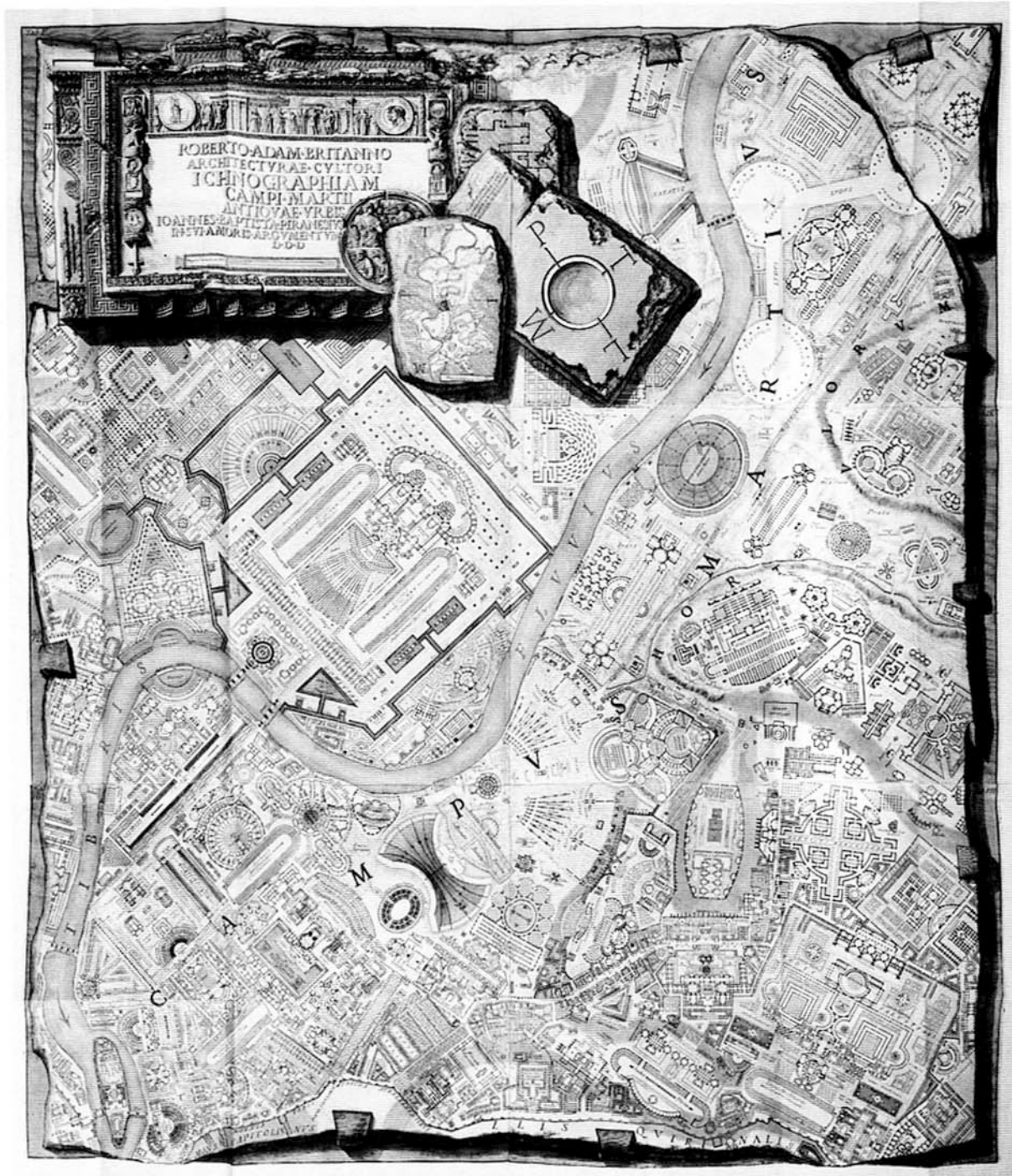
<sup>116</sup> Dixon (as note 109), pp. 196–204.

<sup>117</sup> Miller 1978 (as note 15), p. 254.

<sup>118</sup> Wilton-Ely (as note 14), p. 539. In his own compilation of the *Polemical Works* (1972) Wilton-Ely does not include the *Campo Marzio* in his survey of polemical works spanning from 1757 to 1769. However, its publication date of 1762 places it at the center of this chronological framework and Wilton-Ely includes it in the article of 1976 as cited. Miller notes that Piranesi first began to work on this project in 1755 and that the approbation from the Pope dates from June 16, 1761. See: Miller 1978 (as note 15), pp. 253f. For a discussion of »polemics« in relation to Winckelmann during the same period, see Ernst Osterkamp, *Johann Joachim Winckelmanns »Heftigkeit im Reden und Richten«*. *Zur Funktion der Polemik in Leben und Werk des Archäologen*, Stendal 1996.

<sup>119</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, trans. by P. d'Acerno and R. Connolly, Cambridge/Mass. 1987, pp. 33–35 (first Italian edition, 1980).

<sup>120</sup> Marcel Baumgartner, *Topographie als Medium der Erinnerung in Piranesi's »Campo Marzio dell' Antica Roma«*, in: Wolfram Martini (ed.), *Architektur und Erinnerung*,



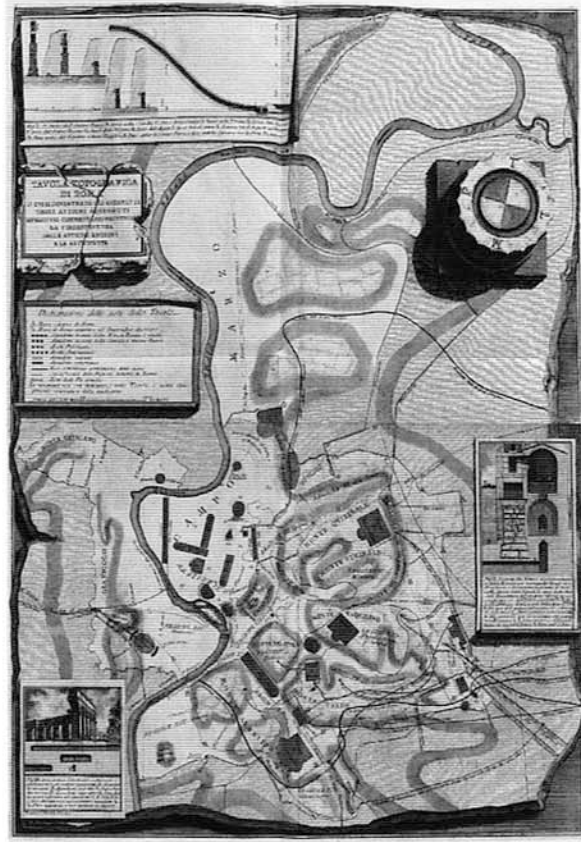
8. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Ichnographiam Campi Martii antiquae urbis*, 1762



urban organisation, it stretches Baroque strategies of composition and planning to the breaking point. Within this vast marshy plain, dewatered by an ornate system of pools and canals, Piranesi displays a compendium of typological fragments denoting the various institutions of early Imperial Rome: temples, baths, theaters, libraries, tombs and the sundial of Augustus. In Bianchini's terms, the *Campo Marzio* presents a city »understood not only by its plan, its buildings, but also its governing institutions«. Displaying a minimum of organizational hierarchy, Tafuri terms this a »swarm of theoretically equivalent forms« the concrete outlines of any one structure are often blurred or displaced into the adjoining structure.<sup>121</sup> However I would argue that this condition, so disturbing to Tafuri, is intended to keep the imaginative act of historical reconstruction open: it is a pastiche in the positive sense articulated by



9. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Title Page, Ioannis Baptistae Piranesii ...*, 1762



10. G. B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane, vol. I, Tavola Topografica di Roma ...*, 1756

Bianchini. And, as Bianchini envisioned the historian as architect, Piranesi here envisions the architect as antiquarian and historian.

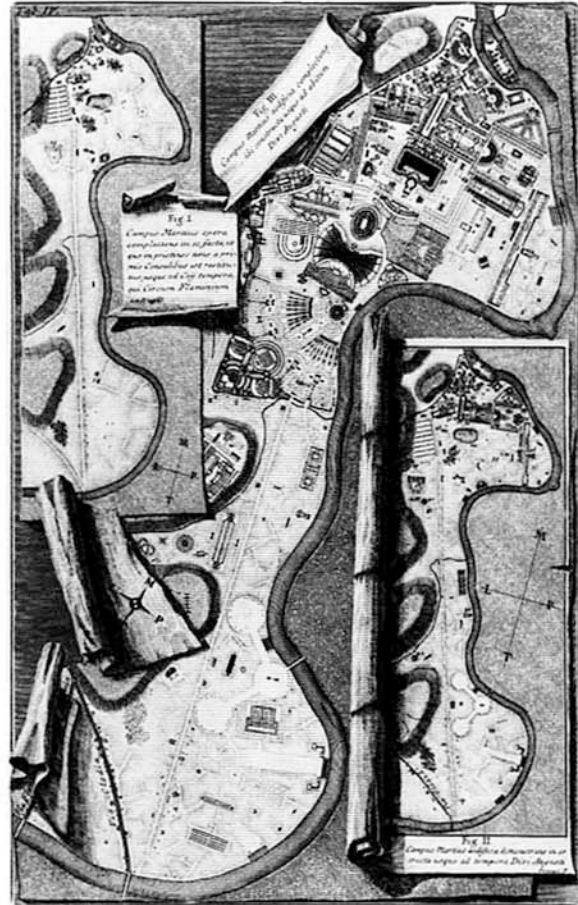
Unlike earlier publications such as *Le Antichità Romane* in which Piranesi insisted on his status as architect, the title page to the *Campo Marzio* displays his archaeological credentials and he inscribes *Antiquariorum Regiae Societatis Londinensis* directly below his own name (fig. 9). Dedicated to his friend Robert

Göttingen 2000, pp. 71–102, esp. p. 74. See also Marcel Baumgartner's »Akribische Visionen. Zu Rekonstruktion der Domus aurea in der Pianta dell'antico Foro Romano (Le Antichità Romane, Band I, Tafel XLIII« in: Max Stemshorn et. al. (eds.), *Visionen Piranesi*, Berlin 2002, pp. 31–42. I thank Professor Klaus Jan Philipp for this last reference.

<sup>121</sup> Tafuri (as note 119), p. 40.



11. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Topographia vestigiorum veteris urbis et Campi Martii*, 1762



12. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, [Tre piante del Campo Marzio]*, 1762

Adam, the *Campo Marzio* includes a series of three topographical maps of comparable size reminiscent of the much larger *Tavola Topografica di Roma* (fig. 10) of the first volume of *Le Antichità Romane* depicting the system of water supply in the ancient city. Unlike the *Tavola Topografica*, which is etched as if engraved in stone, these first maps of the *Campo Marzio* are depicted as drawn on vellum or parchment.<sup>122</sup> Two of the three (figs. 11, 12) are amended with smaller maps and drawings (for a total of eight maps and one view) in a graphic assemblage similar to engravings in Piranesi's *Descrizione e disegno dell'emissario del Lago Albano*, also of 1762. Taken together, these maps describe the progressive development – or, as Baumgartner surmises – the simultaneous depiction of all layers

and all times associated with the Field of Mars as Rome grew from a republican state to an imperial power.<sup>123</sup> Considered either as depictions of found historical documents or as Piranesi's own historical reconstructions, these plans distinguish themselves from the centerpiece of the publication: the monumental plan of the completed *Campo Marzio*. The largest of his published

<sup>122</sup> The size of the *Tavola Topografica* from *Le Antichità* is 840 × 600 mm. In the *Campo Marzio* the sizes of the topographical maps are 385 × 275 mm, 445 × 285 mm, and 445 × 290 mm. The direction north-south has also been reversed. In *Le Antichità* the map is depicted as a stone engraving, whereas in the *Campo Marzio* they are depicted as drawn on parchment.

<sup>123</sup> Baumgartner 2000 (as note 120), p. 90.

engravings, measuring 1350 × 1170 mm, Piranesi presents it as a true plan of this part of ancient Rome.<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless, it is equally clear that the *Campo Marzio*, dominated by the tombs of Augustus and Hadrian, is an imaginative field: a projection in plan of the architectural compendiums found in engravings such as the renowned *Antiquus bivii viarum appiuae at ardeatine* and the *Antiquus circi martial*. These two spectacular inventions from the second and third volumes of *Le Antichità Romane* remind us again of the rôle of the *capriccio* but the scale of the *Campo Marzio* precludes its interpretation as a mere *capricci*. More accurately, it might be conceived of as a tool of historical reclamation. Piranesi underscores this interpretation by, as with the *Tavola Topografica* and the *Pianta di Roma*, depicting the *Campo Marzio* as etched in stone: a monumental artifact from a monumental city.<sup>125</sup>

The *Campo Marzio* exhibits an intentional ambiguity between historical artifact and inventive creation. This ambiguity is compounded by the illustrations accompanying the plan. Conventions of eighteenth-century illustrations of cities (those not presented as aerial perspectives or ichnographic projections) suggest that the illustrations be incorporated as a border or frame to the plan. However, Piranesi separates his »paper« illustrations of the *Campo Marzio* from the plan, begging the question as to whether these ought to be understood as his own inventive projections. Serving as frontispiece, one of these depicts a striking interpretation of Hadrian's Tomb reminiscent of the Tower of Babel (fig. 13). Like the title page, it too announces Piranesi's antiquarian credentials. A large etching, it is complemented with separate, detailed views of the Theaters of Balbus and Marcellus, the Amphitheater of Statilus Taurus and the Pantheon (fig. 14). The latter are smaller images similar in size to the *vedute* found in Piranesi's earlier publications. Included amongst the remainder of the volume's more typical engravings is the remarkable *Reliquiae Templi pseudodipteri Antoniani Pii* depicting the Pantheon and the temple of Antonius Pius in their eighteenth-century state of ruin, but completely stripped of their eighteenth-century context. Viewed together, the various scales, histories, and modes of representation of the *Campo Marzio* make

for uneasy discontinuities. Although indisputably more impressive than Bianchini's illustrations, the intent is strikingly similar: the discontinuity forces the viewer into the position of an active and an imaginative participant in the reconstruction of the ancient past. Unlike Bianchini's work, the overall ambiguity of the *Campo Marzio* also enables an active reconstruction of the present.

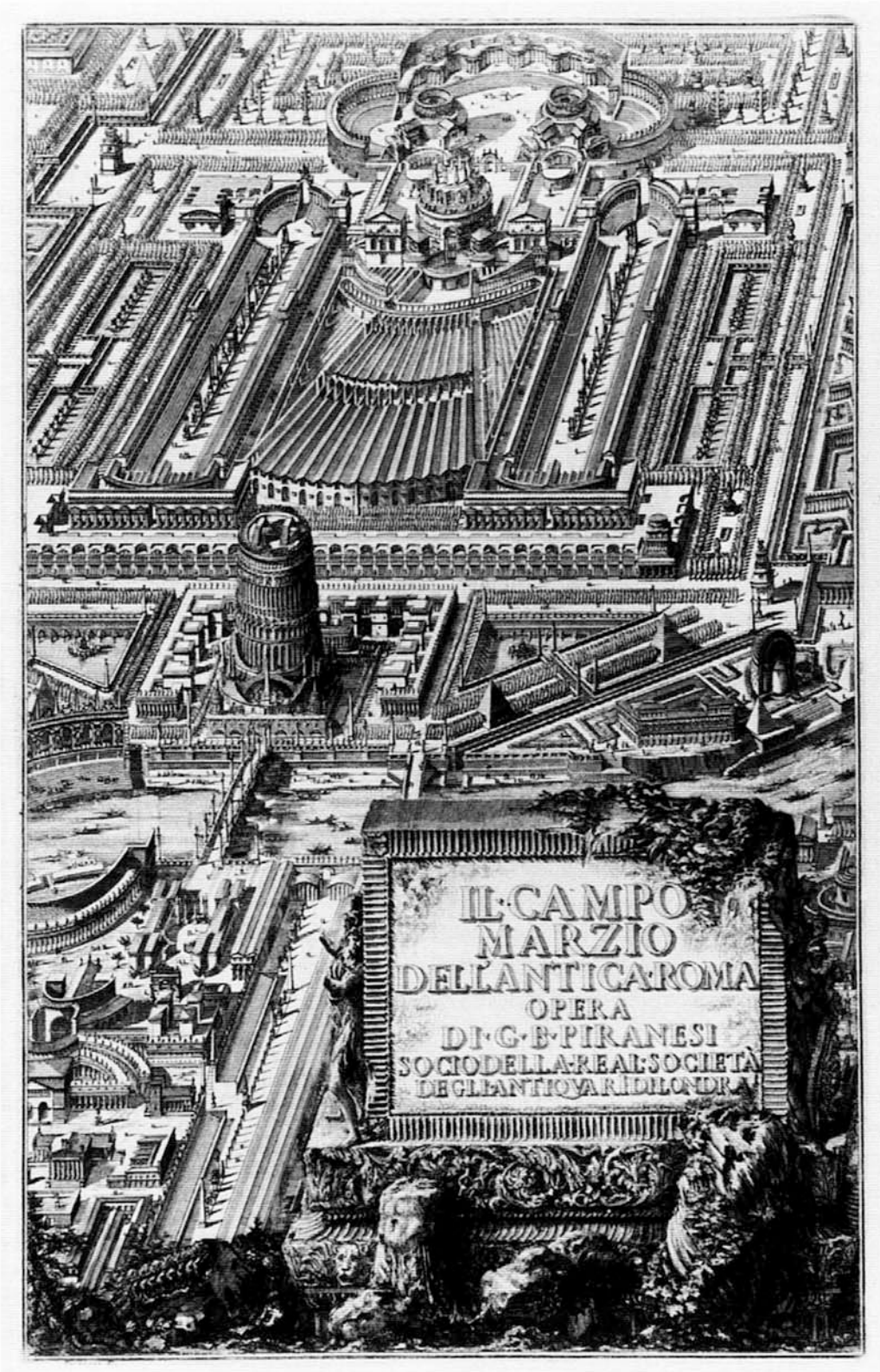
In relation to the Graeco-Roman controversies and the issue of history, another question should be asked of the *Campo Marzio*: why does Piranesi choose this particular site – one illustrative of Imperial rather than Republican Rome? If Rykwert interprets Piranesi's work as a *memento mori* that »cannot be again«, Tafuri interprets the intention of the *Campo Marzio* as one that *should* never be again. Citing a passage from the dedicatory letter to Robert Adam in which Piranesi exclaims that »[...] when [...] the Empire was given to one person alone [...] that site was kept no longer for the use of the military, but to introduce the populace to pleasure« Tafuri insists that »Piranesi hides between the lines his negative opinion of the transformations wrought on the *Campo Marzio* in the Imperial Age [...] it is not difficult to discern here a parallel between the ancient tyranny of *one man alone* and the tyranny of the ancien régime«. <sup>126</sup> Whether the reign of Louis XV can be considered as »tyrannical« is open to question but, as with Rykwert's interpretation, it is unlikely that Piranesi invested his skills in creating a negative image of ancient Rome. As will become clear however, Tafuri's reference to Paris is helpful in returning our attention to the French.

<sup>124</sup> It is actually comprised of six plates. For the correct numbering sequence, see Baumgartner 2000 (as note 120), p. 77 (footnote 19).

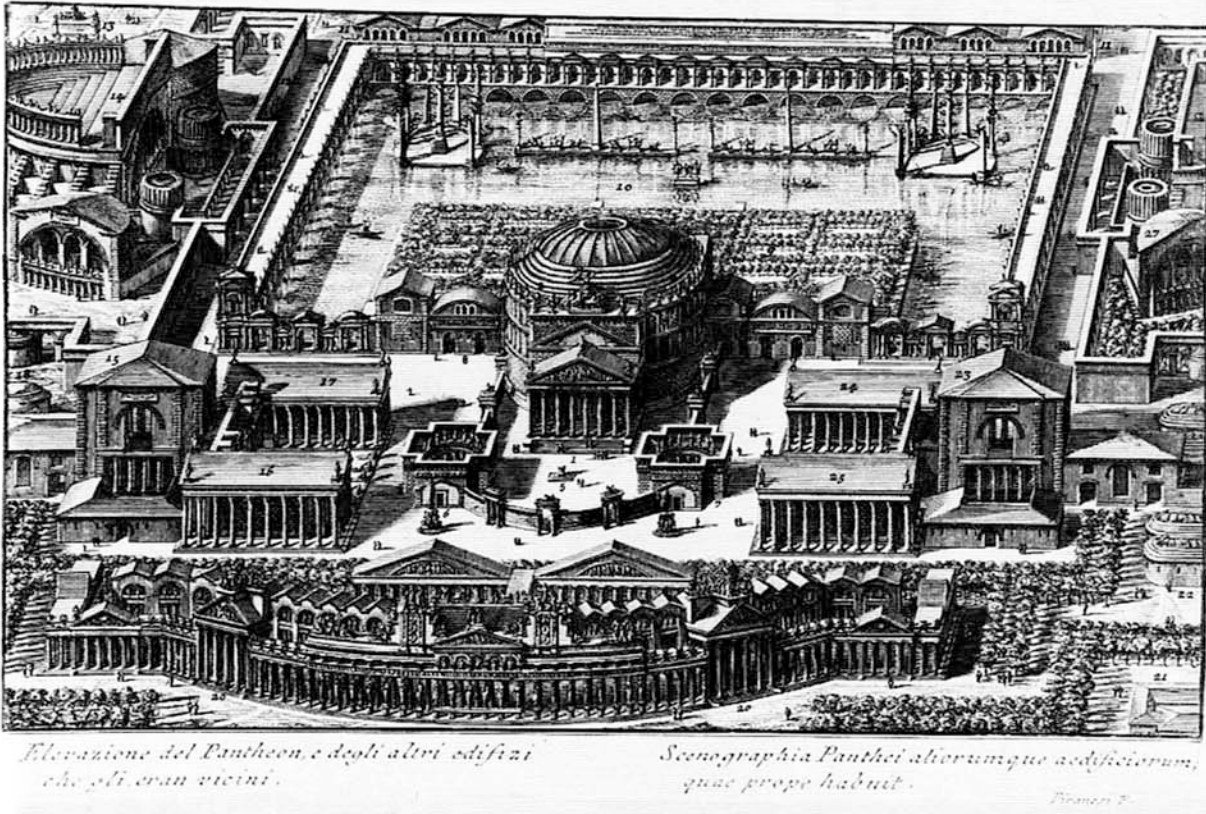
<sup>125</sup> The *Forma Urbis* dates from the early third century. Originally 18.10 meters wide and 13.0 meters high it was inscribed into 150 marble tablets mounted on a building adjoining Rome's Forum Pacis. Very little of the original survived, but what remains was rediscovered in 1562. First acquired by the Cardinal Allesandro Farnese, the fragments were turned over to the city government of Rome in 1741 with the intention of installing them in the Campidoglio Museum, a project undertaken by Giambattista Noli. It is possible that Piranesi assisted Noli with this project.

<sup>126</sup> Tafuri (as note 119), p. 37.





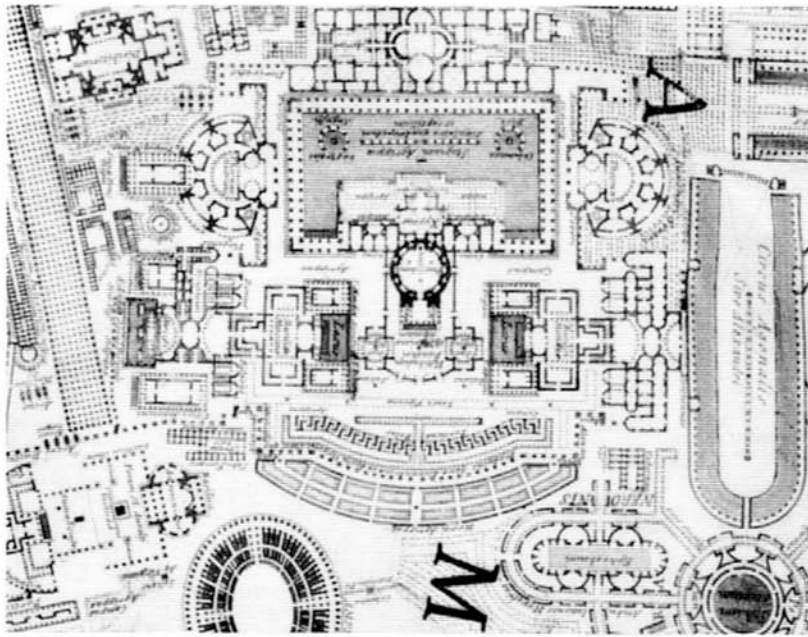
13. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Frontispiece*, 1762



14. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Elevazione del Pantheon, e degli altri edifizii che gli eran vicini*, 1762

Turning again to the four engravings illustrating the plan of the *Campo Marzio*, here those of the frontispiece and the Pantheon, one notices the complex system of pools and canals lined by gardens and, most of all, endless rows of ordered trees. For Piranesi this is unusual if not unique: his *vedute* of eighteenth-century Rome are largely devoid of any vegetation while his images of ruins abound with wild and unruly growth. Even his engravings of the gardens of the Villa Pamphili or the Villa d'Este in Tivoli (both from the *Vedute di Roma*) depict gardens gone to seed. Water too is largely limited to either subterranean or natural themes such as River Tiber or the cascades at Tivoli. In contrast, the perspective elevations of the *Campo Marzio*, particularly those of Hadrian's Tomb and the Pantheon, impresses as an idealized vision of a city incorporating elements of large-scale gardens and parks into its structure. Canals, pools and allées abound; the lat-

ter not confined to the perspectives but appearing as the endless dashed lines inscribed in the surface of the great plan of the *Campo Marzio* itself (details, figs. 15, 16). Difficult to see in small-scale reproductions, these lines are clearly evident in the full-scale plane, providing it with, if not an underlying structure, then a complementary one. Taken together with the profusion of architectural fragments, one is reminded of Laugier, whose *Essai sur l'architecture* presents an image of the city quite unlike his notion of the primitive hut: »One must look at a town as a forest. [...] It is therefore no small matter to draw a plan for a town in such a way that the splendor of the whole is divided into an infinite number of beautiful, entirely different details so that one hardly meets the same objects again, and, wandering from one end to the other, comes in every quarter across something new, unique, startling, so that there is order and yet a sort of confusion [...] and a multitude



15. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Ichnographiam Campi Martii antiquae urbis*, 1762, detail

of regular parts brings about a certain impression of irregularity and disorder which suits great cities so well. To do this one must master the art of combination and have a soul full of fire and imagination [...] What happy thoughts, ingenious turns, variety of expression, wealth of idea, bizarre connections, lively contrasts, what fire and boldness, what a sensational composition!<sup>127</sup>

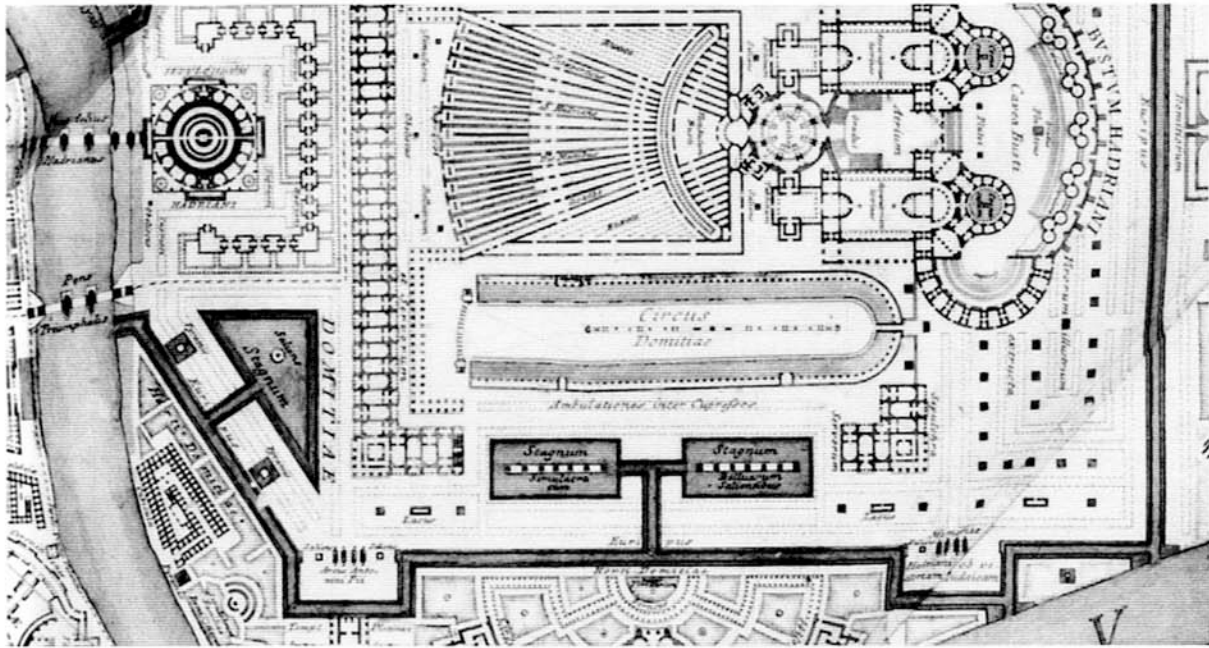
For Laugier, as for many of his contemporaries, pleasure is to be found in contrast and variety. If the tenets of neoclassicism prevented this axiom from reaching expression in architectural form, then the garden, the park and the city demanded it. As noted above, Wilton-Ely interprets the *Campo Marzio* as a response to Winckelmann, but it is more likely a response to Laugier. Unlike the *Tomb of the Scipios* in which Piranesi lampoons Laugier, the *Campo Marzio* undermines Laugier's position by appropriating it. Piranesi provides exactly what Laugier has advocated; albeit in very Piranesian terms. However, in acting as architect and engineer while insisting on his own credentials as antiquarian in both the *Campo Marzio's* title page and frontispiece, Piranesi also trumps Winckelmann. As connoisseur and antiquarian, the city was an area of practical and theoretical concern for which Winckelmann was unequipped to follow. It is to the conceptual

framework provided by Bianchini, one in which history was to be understood in terms of the city, that Piranesi is indebted. That he is aware of this position can be inferred from his explication to Robert Adam in which he declares that: »What I must fear, rather, is that certain aspects of this delineation of the *Campo* might seem inspired by mere caprice, rather than drawn from what is real; if someone compares these aspects with the ancient manner of architecture, he will see that many of them break with tradition and resemble the usage of our own time. But whoever he is, before condemning anyone of imposture, let him observe the ancient plan of Rome mentioned above [i.e., the *Forma Urbis*], let him observe the ancient villas of Lazio, the villa of Hadrian in Tivoli, the sepulchres, and the other buildings in Rome that remain, in particular, outside of Porta Capena: He will not find more things invented by the moderns, than by the ancients, in accordance with the most rigid laws of architecture.«<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Laugier (as note 11), pp. 128ff.

<sup>128</sup> The preface addressed to Robert Adam in: Johannes Baptista Piranesius, *Campus Martius Antiquae Urbis*, Romae 1762. Quoted in Philip Jacks, *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity. The Origins of Rome in Renaissance Thought*, Cambridge 1993, p. 252.





16. G. B. Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Ichnographiam Campi Martii antiquae urbis*, 1762, detail

Here the history of the city and the city of history, both of which are known through observation, are fused into an imaginative totality answering not only the aesthetic issues of tradition, invention and imitation that mark the Graeco-Roman controversies, but also the relationship of the antiquarian fragment to historical unity. Even Piranesi's reference to the »most rigid« laws of architecture, when considered in terms of Vico's notion of Roman law as a form of poetry, must be understood as implying the laws of poetry that include the pleasures of variety and the imagination rather than the normative canon of Vitruvianism. This fusion of poetry and history, invention and law, fragment and unity might thus best be understood as the »archaeological sublime«.

#### Conclusion

Winckelmann and Piranesi, with their alternating concerns for the archaeological fragment and human history, can be understood as suspended between the tropes of particularism and universalism. Lacking the tools necessary to forge a precise link between the two, each attempted in his own way to move from the em-

pirical fragment to historical unity by making a leap of the imagination. On the one hand, this historical unity had an emancipatory character: reconciling the duality of nature and culture, it held the promise of cultural rejuvenation. On the other hand, the eighteenth-century concept of »unity« also had a particularly aesthetic flavor. For Winckelmann and Piranesi this leap from fragment to unity was underwritten by the tropes and figures of a distinctive literary tradition derived from both Aristotelian poetics and Longinian rhetoric and firmly anchored in the *Querelle*. Insofar as this tradition was filtered through French neoclassical theory, it is not surprising that it involved mid-century popularizers of architectural theory and taste such as Laugier and Le Roy. But at their core, the Graeco-Roman controversies remain as concerned with history as with aesthetics.

Therefore we can summarize by stating that the thought of Winckelmann and Piranesi must be viewed not only from the perspectives of aesthetics and identity, but must include a third, historical, point of view. Taken together, these three can be outlined as follows: first, operating within an aesthetic discourse deter-

mined by the *Querelle* and its aftermath, Winckelmann, enthralled with a nature perfected by art, the unity of contour and the seamless continuity of the polished marble surface; and Piranesi, immersed in the endless combinatory possibilities of the particular in creating an architecture more a »work of nature than art«;<sup>129</sup> were both instrumental in profoundly extending this discourse. Second, both were occupied with consolidating and strengthening the status of their respective cultures in the face of French hegemony. Third, both sought to reconstruct the history of art and architecture by combining the material evidence assembled by the antiquarian into an imaginative totality. This may appear both anachronistic and as a reversal of Enlightenment trends moving from rationalism to empiricism. But it is this particular mode of fusing the empirical with the imaginative to delineate a history that still lay beyond their concrete grasp that marks the fascination of Winckelmann and Piranesi with creating a new, aesthetic, philosophy of history. This fusion might productively be termed the archaeological sublime, a term itself unifying two concepts generally considered as historically contradictory. Existing but briefly before succumbing to more systematic forms of aesthetic his-

torism, and then historicism, this mode of comprehension formed the constitutive moment of art historical thought. As such, it may well find its echo in our own continuing attraction to the work and thought of Winckelmann and Piranesi.

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<sup>129</sup> G. B. Piranesi: »fatte più dalla Natura che dall' arte«. These words close the lengthy text accompanying the image entitled »Modo, col quale furono alzati i grossi Travertini, e gli altri Marmi....« depicting the construction of the mausoleum of Cecilia Metella. In: *Le Antichità Romane* III; Focillon image 335; Wilton-Ely image 468; Taschen image 325.

#### Abbildungsnachweis:

1: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek. – 2–6, 9, 11–14: Graphische Sammlung im Städelschen Kunstinstitut Frankfurt am Main/Photo: M. Kolod. – 7, 10: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung. – 8, 15, 16: Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.