BIOGRAPHY

- Born Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy on October 28, 1755 in Paris, France
- His cloth merchant family was of a Parisian bourgeois
- Attended College Louis-le-Grande to study law and later learned sculpture at G. Courstou’s atelier.
- 1776 traveled to Italy, visiting Naples with Jacques Louis David (painter) and Antonio Canova (sculptor)
- 1785 he won a prize for Mèmoire sur l’architecture ègyptienne, an essay on Egyptian architecture, which initiated his career as a scholar.
- Received no professional training in architecture
- From 1816 – 1839 he served as permanent secretary to the Académie des Beaux-Arts and sought to control all official building.
- As secretary, was also responsible for selecting students and awarding the Prix de Rome.
- Very much the fervent neo-classicist, wanted to preserve the antiquity.
TREATISE vs DICTIONARY

• Quatremère did not write a formal treatise; instead, he was commissioned to write the first formal dictionary of architecture.

• What does writing a dictionary accomplish?

  1. A need for clarification and careful distinctions between meanings of words that had overtime, accrued multiple ambiguous meanings and connotations.

     • In hopes of “satisfying all classes of readers by embracing the universality of knowledge comprised by subject.”

  2. For the first time, instead of writing for a patron or institutional privilege, Quatremère writes for the public.

  3. In an age of expanding readership and scholarly academic professionalism, the dictionary was easily produced and equally a readily consumed object.
IDEA OF IMITATION

- Quatremère believed that architecture was imitative of nature in two ways:
  1. In the details of nature – like the certain characteristics of an individual
  2. In nature as a collective whole – like referring to a specific species

- In regards to Laugier’s hut:
  - Architecture has no direct model in nature that can be concretely considered an origin.
  - The hut is merely the beginning, not an origin because a certain distance had to be traveled in architectural theory to arrive at it.
  - Influence should be seen, not in a material sense, but in a metaphorical one

- Nature offers three kinds of materials:
  1. Earth – when made into bricks, ranks among stone.
  2. Stone – projections and cornices received their form from imitating wood
  3. Wood – offers a vast array of analogies, inductions and free assimilations
• Believed the beginning of laws, principles, theory, and practice of architecture went back to the Greeks. (typical for a neo-classicist)

• Architecture imitates types or models presented by nature to art.

• Also theorized that Laugier’s hut was not the beginning of architecture, but merely one of three original architectural types:
  
  1. Hut
     • Post and lintel construction
     • Transposed into stone and became a model for Greek architecture
  
  2. Cave
     • Heavy dark interiors marked religious architecture of the Egyptians
  
  3. Tent
     • Light and mobile structure shows traces in wooden structures of the Chinese.

• Each of the three types originated as shelter for a kind of people in a particular place, all bound by the laws of necessity, through use, climate, or country.
• **TYPE** - is an object with respect to which each artist can conceive works of art that may have no resemblance to each other

• **MODEL** - is an object that should be repeated as is

• **CHARACTER** - implies something more expressive than type.
  - Quatremère distinguishes three meanings of architectural character:
    1. **Essential Character** - natural character, the purest simplest essence of something
    2. **Distinctive Character** - refers to a building’s dominant quality
    3. **Relative Character** - two parts
      a) **Ideal** - art of architecture metaphysically considered
      b) **Imitative** - allows for sensuous ideas through manipulation of forms
    *Relative character is much like that of ideal beauty and imitative beauty*
Quatremère’s last theory is a metaphysical one that distinguishes the source of rules, namely principles.

Principles are considered to be simple truths from which many lesser truths or rules are derived.

Quatremère’s four classes of rules (first two are based on nature and the second two are based on conventions):

1. Reason or “the nature of things”
   - The theory of art in architecture – imitation, invention, principles, rules
2. Constitution of the soul, mind, and senses
   - Beauty in architecture – symmetry, eurythmy, proportion, ordonnance
3. Authority of precedents
   - Retrieval of traditional knowledge – antique, restoration, restitution
4. Even habit and prejudice
   - Theoretical parameters influencing renewal within tradition – indissociable couples imitation and invention, conventions and genius
In 1791 Quatremère de Quincy transformed the Church of St. Genevieve into the Parthenon.
THE END
B I B L I O G R A P H Y


