Memory Connection
Volume 1 Number 1

De Architectura as Architectural Time Capsule: On Inventing a New Classical Memory

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Abstract

It is well established that archaeologists, architectural historians, heritage planners, and design theorists are linked within a disciplinary gaze towards the architectural past. The link is one that is founded in the classical tradition that in turn is bounded by Vitruvius' 10 books on architecture: *De architectura*. The treatise (a memory container for classical architecture), and its dozens of translations, transcriptions, and eventual transformations, form the topic of discussion for this article. I focus on how the same written script has become the memory container for classical architecture. I also explore the significance of *De architectura* as vessel of classical architectural knowledge extending from Antiquity to the present. Key to the discussion is the fact that versions of the treatise continue to be used as classical pattern books (or "proof" of accuracy) in understanding: the function of ruins in informing the reconstruction of monuments; the restoration of historically significant spaces; and the contextual intactness of their architectural embodiment. Through the use of an example, the article challenges the unquestioned use of *De architectura* as keeper of classical architectural memory.

Keywords: Vitruvius, memory, classical architecture, classical theatres, reconstruction

Preface

Very clearly, we are experiencing acceleration in monument building and commemorative activity. It is also clear that Pierre Nora's notions of *lieux* and *milieux* (as related to monuments and memory) could readily be developed further to include "emptiness" in refining his theoretic.[1] However, the notion of "emptiness", as evocative as it can be in terms of monument design and building, and especially in terms of eventual commemorative activity, can be a slippery one where the gap created could in time be filled with memories that might have little to do with the original intent. Intentional or not, gaps, emptiness, and voids "work" in commemorative activity simply because the event, persons, or moment to be commemorated persists and is relatively clear in the collective memory. However, what happens when the collective memory is no longer charged with the same memories? This article relates to the latter, although dealing with a different kind of void, the architectural void of classical ruins.[2]

Introduction

One set of fragments that is still used in commemorative activity is the ensemble of classical monuments that persist throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond. Greece, for example, has been in the process of rebuilding dozens of theatres as monuments commemorating what could be called "better times". I suggest that there persists a dual process within which "gaps" are used when rebuilding (in this case classical monuments) in order to arrive at a specific outcome (ideal classical types). Although not necessarily intentional, this revises our very notion of what classical architecture is and therefore what it can be made to stand for. I consider the first part of the process by going back to the use of the sourcebook, or memory container of classical architectural information, *De architectura.*

The 2000-year-old treatise outlines its author, Vitruvius', thoughts on *architectura.* This is not a book about his "current" architecture per se; it is about architecture the way he thought it should be. How this book is interpreted is key because its reading continues to define and arbitrate *the classical*. One of the features of the multitude of translations of the book is their penchant for illustrative material. I have always wondered why translators and transcribers have, through the last 500 years, been so persistent in providing drawings to supplement the words in this book. This, of course, alters the original, and what this means is that our notion of what "classical" entails also changes in time.

When it comes to classical architecture, for example, very rarely do we find research that does not include at least some reference to the ancient text. This comes from a tradition born out of Renaissance treatise writing, influenced by *De architectura*. This was combined with traditions related to the training of architects, where ancient ruins were measured, drawn, and then compared to the tenets found in Vitruvius' work. Schools of architecture continued the practice and today

we find echoes of the same tradition within curricula. Five hundred years after Alberti, we still find students of architecture visiting Rome, measuring monuments, drawing the ruins, comparing them to *De architectura,* and known examples, and producing reconstruction drawings.[3]

The result has not been without repercussions. A secondary set of traditions has emerged, where monuments are reconstructed using the same *modus operandi*. That is, ruined monuments are physically reconstructed by measuring their ruined state, compared to Vitruvius' highly generalised tenets, generating a set of reconstruction drawings, and rebuilding monuments. The process is one that involves the complicity of historians, architects, builders, and chroniclers of classical architecture. This article outlines and retraces such a process: the reconstruction of the *cavea* theatre at Orange, France, and the acceptance of the resulting construction as a genuine classical monument.

The theatre at Orange

Sited within the urban plan of the Roman settlement, the theatre at Orange (Arausio)[4] was initially built during the first century AD, perhaps earlier, and would have quite clearly been a magnificent civic monument.[5]

Figure 1. The theatre at Orange – 1955. Source: Archives d'Orange.

For an idea of its scale, consider that the *cavea*; its circular seating space, is approximately 103 metres wide and seats some 7,000 spectators. The highest seats are over 30 metres above the *orchestra*. The *scaenae frons,* or scene, is divided into horizontal levels, with an assortment of bays and niches that would have accommodated statues on its inner façade, as well as a set of doorways along the lower part of its elevation. The *scaenae* building has inner spaces designed for

a variety of uses. Along its inner and outer faces can still be seen traces of the architectural decor that would have fitted within a comprehensive iconographic and memorial programme.[6] The facade of the colossal building confronts the present-day viewer as it must have stunned the urban dweller or visitor of Antiquity. Outside the building, to the north of the main wall, is a plaque that reads:

UNESCO
Cet ensemble monumental est inscrit sur la liste du Patrimoine mondial. L'inscription sur cette liste consacre la valeur universelle et exceptionelle d'un bien culturel ou naturel afin qu'il soit protégé au bénéfice de l'humanité.

Théâtre Antique d'Orange
Patrimoine mondial[7]

With words like "Patrimoine mondial" (world heritage), "valeur universelle" (universal value), and "protégé au bénéfice de l'humanité" (protected for the benefit of humanity), it is impossible to consider the space about to be entered without a pre-registered feeling of awe. The same observer might purchase the official guidebook.[8] Opening it, the second sentence of the theatre description reads: "This building, as the one at Arles, presents all of the tenets of Vitruvius' Latin theatre: the semi-circular *cavea* with radiating stairways, lateral access points, the *scaenae* wall with superimposed decorative orders and a *parascaenia.*"[9] With UNESCO, the Direction du Patrimoine's official guidebook, and Vitruvius as authorities, questioning the authenticity and architectural integrity of the monument seems quite redundant.

The historical tradition

The theatre appears to have fallen into disuse some time during the fourth or fifth centuries after waves of barbaric attacks resulted in fires devastating the inner areas.[10] Little is known of the theatre's use during the Middle Ages. It may have served as a defensive structure for the castle built upon the hill to the south; remnants of a (possibly) medieval tower built atop the *scaenae* wall were still partially intact during the early nineteenth century.[11] One of the earliest textual references to the structure is contained within Jean Bouveyroy's *Discours des entiquitéz de la ville dorange* [sic] of 1649.[12] His narrative is detailed and records the presence of buildings sited within the *cavea* where the seats should have been.[13] From his commentary, we are told that at some point before the

seventeenth century the space was altered substantially. Gone is the *cavea* proper, and now dozens of houses fill the area.[14]

At about the same time that Bouveyroy was writing his *Discours*, Joseph de la Pise was preparing a history of the city and its monuments.[15] In it he provides an account of the theatre, complete with a multitude of references to Antiquity's erudites, such as Varro.[16] What is most interesting is the illustration of the theatre that he provides.

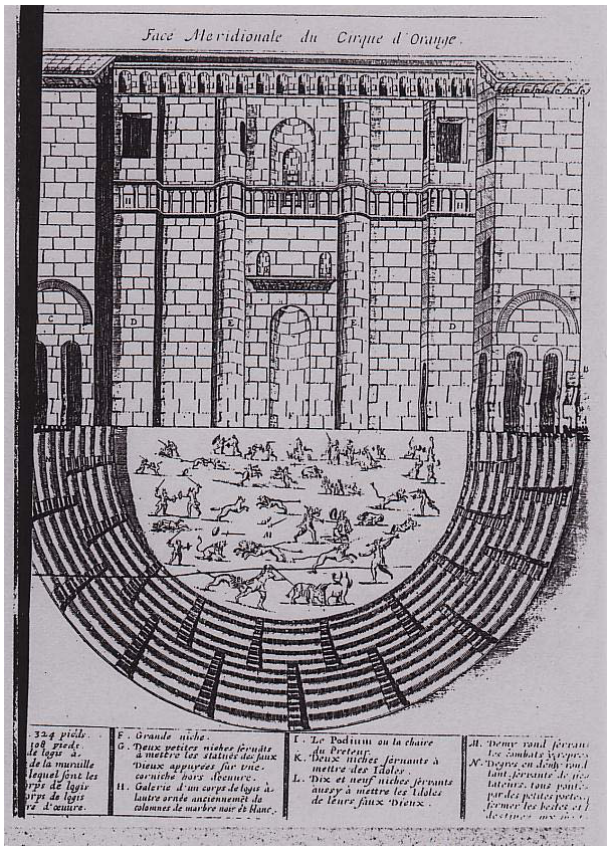

Figure 2. De la Pise's theatre at Orange. Source: de la Pise, 1640, plate 2.

In the textual and visual depictions, de la Pise outlines the theatre with the *scaenae* in full elevation and the *cavea* fitted with horizontal sections of seating, complete with animal fighting gladiators within the orchestra. The *scaenae frons* and *cavea* are completely intact. The difficulty, of course, is that the figure conflicts with Bouveyroy's mention of houses in the *cavea.* In other words, if we accept his words, this illustration seems to have less to do with the remains of the ruined theatre, certainly as far as the *cavea* is concerned. It has more to do with a depiction based partly on a personal classical architectural imagination.

It is possible that de la Pise saw the earlier treatise by Giuliano de Sangallo (c. 1452-1516). Sangallo was adept at interpreting Vitruvius and comparing remnants in the south of France, and one of the examples he focused on was the theatre at Orange.[17]

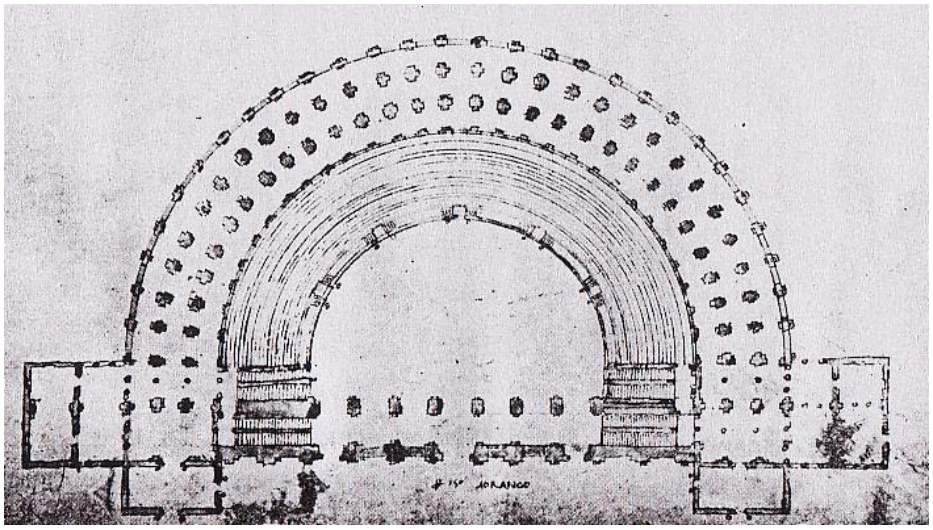

Figure 3. Giuliano de Sangallo's theatre at Orange – late fifteenth century. Source: Archives d'Orange.

De la Pise's textual and visual renderings become more questionable when one examines late eighteenth and early nineteenth century engravings.

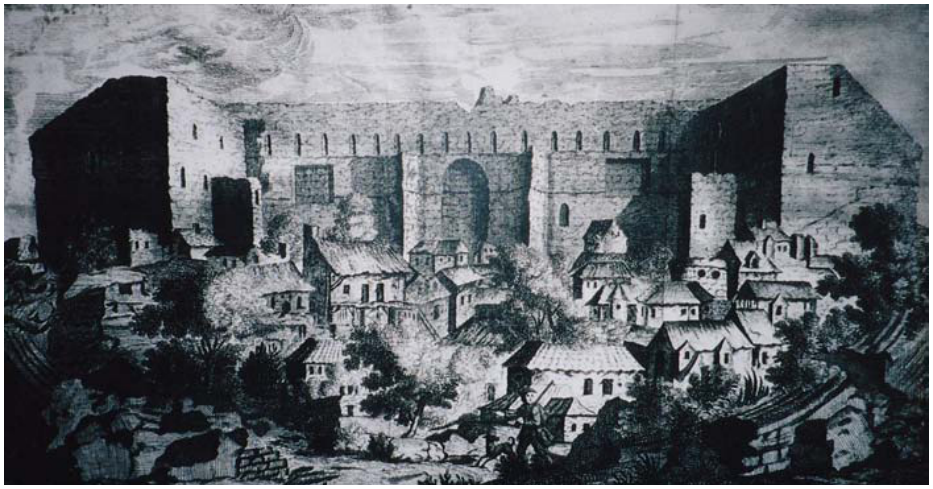

Figure 4. The theatre at Orange – late eighteenth century. P. Fourdrinier (eighteenth century). Source: Musée municipale d'Orange.

Figure 5. The theatre at Orange – early nineteenth century. John-Claude Nattes (1765-1822). Source: Musée municipale d'Orange.

The two images show that at some point after the abandonment of the structure-as-theatre; the *cavea* is certainly overtaken by houses and transformed into a distinct urban living area.

The depiction of the *cavea* as neighbourhood is more in keeping with Bouveyroy's words and less so with de la Pise's rendering, and while it is possible that the engravers are imagining sections of their respective spaces, it is quite likely that they are reflecting the realities of their immediate surroundings.[18] In yet another reference, F. Digonnet tells us that "…Where the seats stood, fifty or so houses were pressed against each other; two streets and two dead ends gave access to them".[19] This is well confirmed by the early nineteenth century Napoleonic cadastral plan.[20]

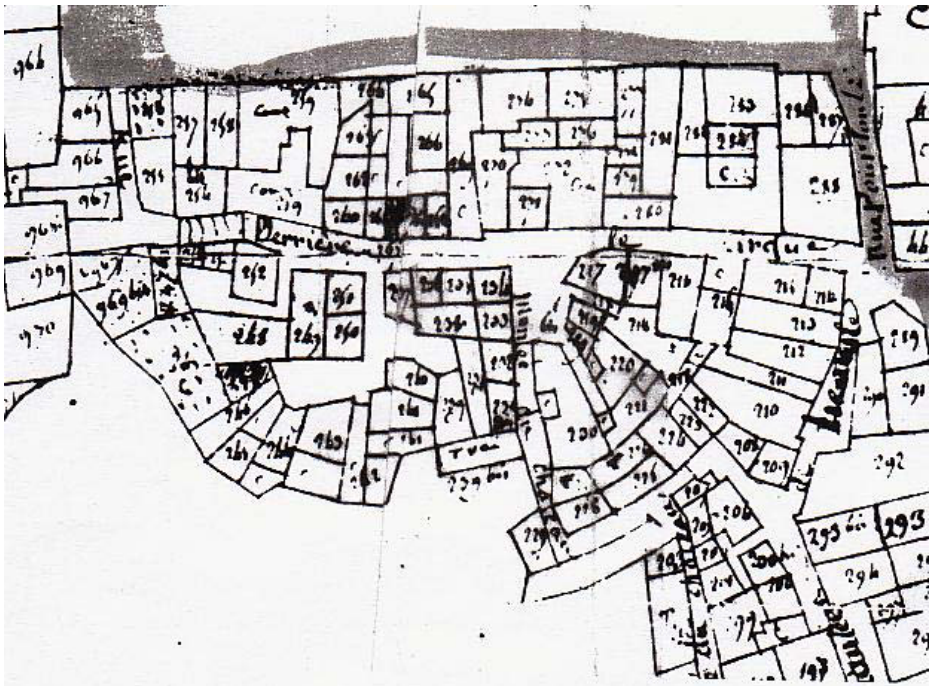

Figure 6. Cadastre Napoléonien – Orange. Source: Musée de la municipalié d'Orange.

Within the survey, the *cavea* is sub-divided into dozens of lots, complete with a street running east-west along the front of what would have once been the *pulpitum*, or stage. The *frons scaenae* remains intact, as it is within the engravings (in both Bouveyroy's and de la Pise's texts).

By the early nineteenth century, it seems certain that the *cavea* had been dismantled during the period since its abandonment in the fourth or fifth centuries. While the *scaenae* stands as a reminder of a past theatre, the whole of what had constituted the physical *cavea* has visibly disappeared. What does remain of the *cavea*, however, is de la Pise's highly imaginative rendering and subsequent researchers would look to the drawing as a starting point in their quests to understand and reconstitute the *cavea*. De la Pise's drawing, like other architectural illustrations of the same theatre, acted as a reference point within the collective imagination; his *cavea* "exists" from the moment the viewer glances at its depiction.

The story of today's theatre begins in 1807, with Aubin-Louis Millin's travel writings.[21] He was a well-respected man, a member of no less than 19 learned societies and at least nine scientific academies, as well as a Professor of Antiquities. His book on the Midi describes urban areas and focuses primarily on classical monuments. For Orange, the entry is substantial and important.[22] He initially outlines the streets and houses and then quickly moves to the triumphal arch and eventually the theatre, and there are certainly references to de la Pise.[23] He begins his theatre discussion with "The circular section within which the spectator seats had been established".[24]

Note that he uses past tense—"étoient établis" (had been established)—when he refers to the seats. This contrasts with his use of the present tense in the rest of his description. The implication is that the seats are no longer *in situ*. Two sentences later he writes: "Vitruve fait mention expresse de ce genre de construction",[25] creating a connection between Vitruvius' words and the *cavea* design at Orange. The difficulty, of course, is that all Roman theatres are "de ce genre" (of this type) because they all have, to some extent, semi-circular seating arrangements. At work here is a very basic mode of authentication (a circular one) where Vitruvius is appropriated to reinforce reconstruction drawings.

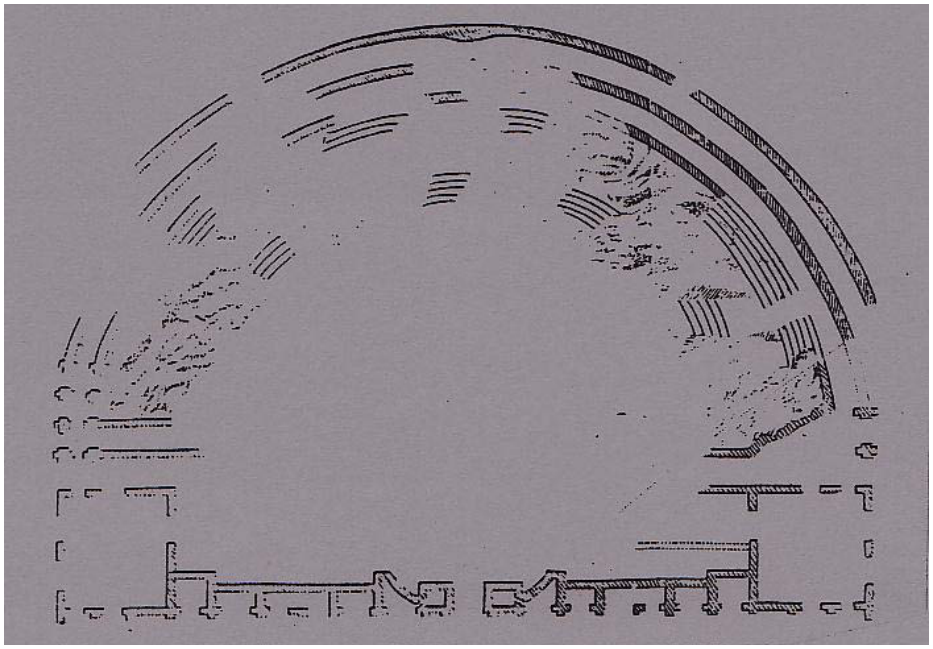

Figure 7. Millin's theatre at Orange. Source: Millin, 1807, plate XXIV.

The same drawing is well worth perusing. Note that Millin uses different lines to show *cavea* remnants, seating limits, and so on. Note also the concentrically-drawn lines depicting the seats; the regularity of these lines renders a feel of accuracy and they will re-appear throughout future renditions of the *cavea*. What is especially impressive about the sketch is that Millin is able to draw it in spite of the approximately 100 medieval houses covering the space.[26] Obviously he is providing a hypothetical drawing based on his research and no-one should assume that it is a precise replication. Knowing that checking would have been physically limited by

the houses, the reader must presume that Millin would have resorted to whatever texts that would have existed, in addition to terrain observation.

However, the texts are limited and Millin only had two or three main architectural sources: de la Pise's earlier work; Sangallo's treatise (which Millin did not mention); and the theatre prescription contained within *De architectura*. He includes two of the references and they provide the reader with assurance that the depiction is accurate. Referencing Vitruvius' *Book V*, any reader would have found it reassuring that Millin's concentric lines "fit" the geometrically-bound model of *De architectura*.[27] This in spite of the fact that Millin's illustration does not, for example, provide a centre-point that would offer the reader a partial opportunity to check the interpretation. In the end, his drawing is schematic at best, and like de la Pise's earlier rendition, it remains for later scholars to study and register it within their imaginations.[28]

Just a few years after Millin's work, another history appears. In his *Histoire de la ville d'Orange et ses Antiquités,*[29] M. de Gasparin recalls in what has become a familiar way of authenticating descriptions of classical monuments, the writers[30] and theatres[31] of Antiquity. In what is about to become a cumulative knowledge-producing sequence, his text continues in de la Pise's and Millin's footsteps,[32] summarising the narratives of the two and offering his own plan of the theatre.

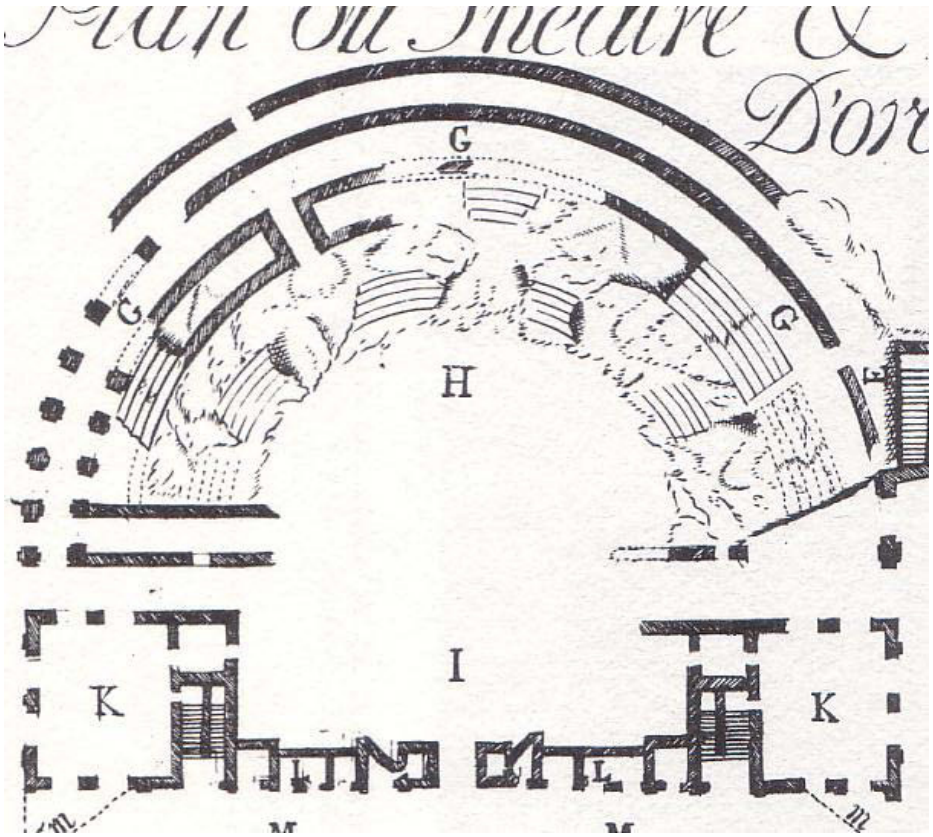

Figure 8. M. de Gasparin's theatre at Orange. Source: M. de Gasparin, 1815, plate 7.

His plan is remarkably similar to Millin's illustration and it is almost certain that he simply traced it and embellished some of the features. Note that in this drawing there are sections of the *cavea* that are drawn as dark outlines as if they are in place, with dotted lines continuing their trajectories presumably depicting hypothetical foundations and other lines that extend beyond the darker outlines. The whole certainly gives the impression of an accurate distinction between what is found on the ground and what is assumed. Again, however, there are dozens of houses standing within the *cavea.* How does de Gasparin arrive at this particular rendition of the remnants?

In 1825, after pleas from academics and municipal officials, *Les Monuments Historiques* began substantial clearing work, and local and state authorities continued to approve financial appropriations well into the 1830s. Within the city's archives we find interesting notes regarding some of the work that are particularly relevant to this article. Pierre Renaux, the *architecte départementale*, who was responsible for portions of the project,[33] described the type, costs, and location of the work. Within his instructions, Renaux remarks that "Les tailleurs de pierres et maçons employés" (The stone carvers and masons employed are to re-work the large blocks—"les blocs antiques"—that are found amid the ruins.)

Further, he instructs that a certain wall should be restituted.[34] In referring to loose blocks, Renaux stipulates that "lorsque leur position aura été reconnue et constatée par l'architecte les blocs qui (gêneront) pour le travail seront enlevés et déposés dans l'endroit qui sera indiqué à l'entrepreneur".[35] Apparently blocks are being removed for repositioning at a later time. Renaux intends to re-place the stones and from at least this point onwards, the clearing work is inextricably linked to the notion of putting things "back in their place". In this case, Renaux is referring to an area parallel to the *frons scaenae* and the *scaenae* wall itself. However, he is also supervising the work throughout the *cavea* and it is no leap to assume that the construction work is taking place wherever he deems it necessary. That masons are employed to do "archaeological" work begs the question: exactly what is being re-built in the *cavea* neighborhood?

As part of the same manuscript, a single, un-numbered page provides Renaux's vision of the theatre.

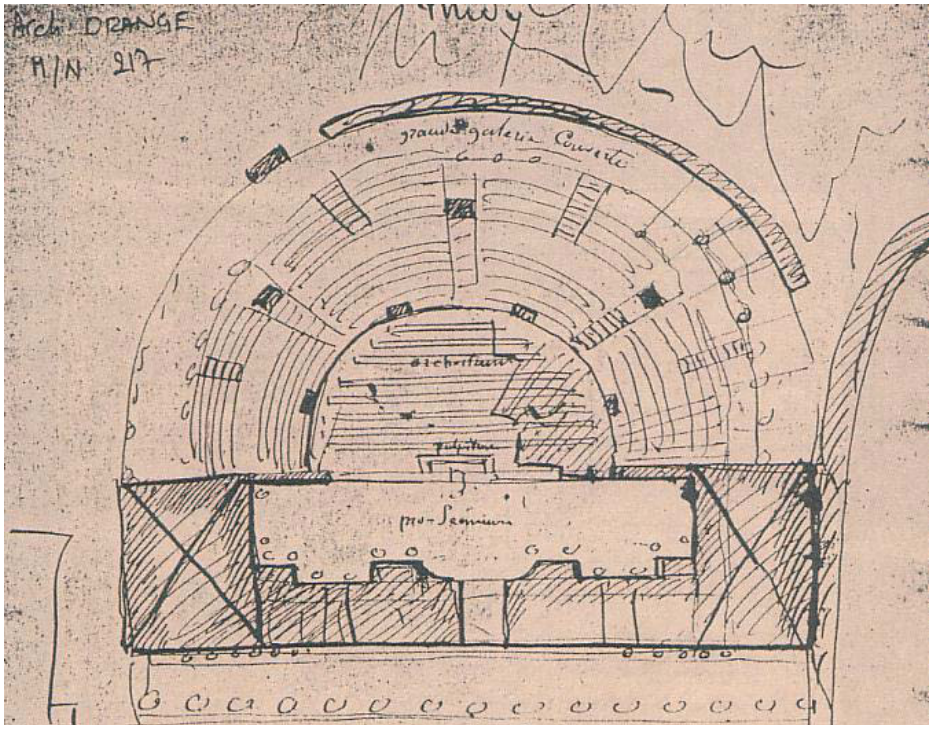

Figure 9. The theatre at Orange – Renaux, 1832. Archives d'Orange – manuscript M/N 217. Source: Musée de la municipalié d'Orange.

The drawing page contains notes and is intended to accompany the instructions. From it we can see that the positioning of seats, stairs, and so on, has been more or less ascertained by Renaux. Recall, once again, that there remain dozens of houses in the space. The figure can only be hypothetical. He probably undertook some research to complement his archaeological explorations, looking at what would have been available; Millin, de la Pise, de Gasparin, and, Vitruvius would have been consulted. It is not certain which reference(s) he consulted. Certain, however, is that there is at least one feature on his sketch that is not contained within the earlier drawings. Scribbled along the upper part of the sketch is a label that says "Grande Gallerie Couverte" (large covered gallery). If the others did not allude to the feature in their renderings, then where does Renaux get the impression that a large, open gallery was built upon the upper *cavea*?[36] One source that was certainly available to Renaux mentions a gallery in that section of the theatre: *De architectura*.[37]

In 1834, Mérimée was named successor to Vitet, the first *inspecteur général des monuments historiques*.[38] This coincides with the publication of his travel book on the region, and the attention and authority that he gains ensures that his work becomes far-reaching within the archaeological and architectural circles of France.[39] His theatre reflections are detailed, incorporating prior readings and observations. The research includes the work of many, including Renaux. He describes the ruins and he records that the *frons scaenae* is relatively intact.[40] At the same time, he notes that the seats are poorly conserved and he highlights the progress in clearing debris, and the expropriation and removal of houses which is by then ongoing.[41]

Mérimée underscores that the remains that were thought to be beneath the same houses have suffered important degradations and thus hints that what he observes may not necessarily be in keeping with the representations of others. In other words, he seems surprised and offers no drawing to complement his commentary. One of the final passages in Mérimée's entry echoes Millin and de Gasparin: "Si l'on ne s'empresse d'y faire de grandes réparations, la France ne possédera pas long-temps encore ce monument presque unique dans son espèce".[42] The book does not offer a reconstruction of the theatre. What it does do, however, is draw a great deal of attention to it. The four-volume book becomes a guide and reference manual for subsequent historians and architect-archaeologists of the region. As *inspecteur general des monuments historiques,* and especially later as *responsible des travaux*, Mérimée would be a key proponent of the construction work at the theatre.

Auguste Caristie's theatre

One of the early nineteenth century proponents of the excavation and consolidation work on the theatre at Orange was Auguste Caristie, a noted architect, who won the Grand Prix de Rome in 1813[43] and was involved with the theatre at least since 1820.[44] He undertook a detailed survey of the *cavea.*

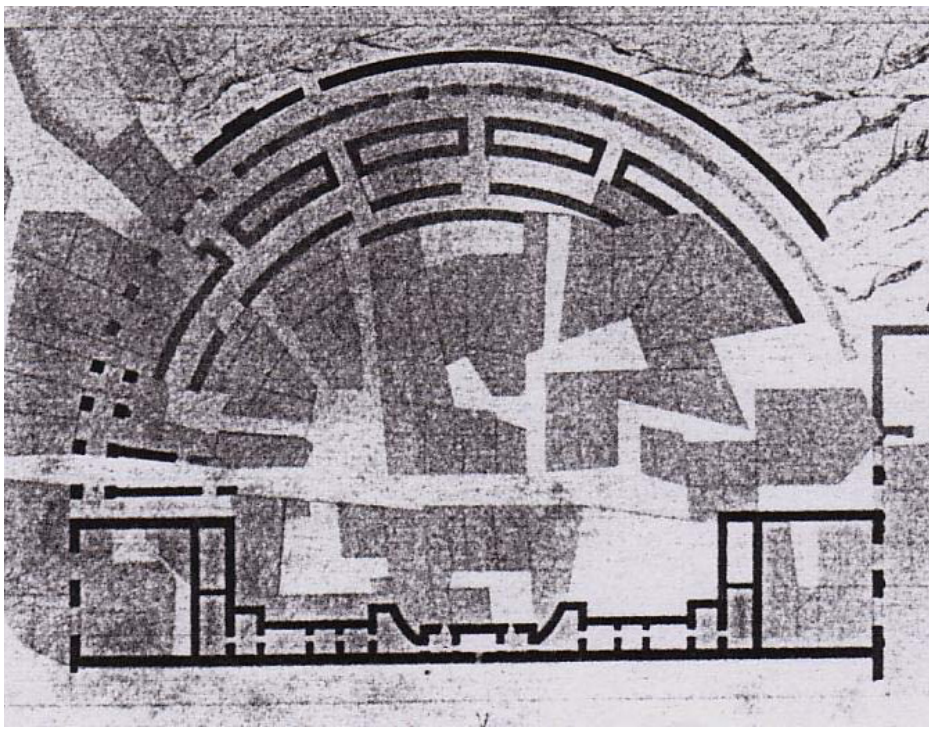

Figure 10. Site plan – Caristie's drawing of theatre remains. Source: Caristie, 1856, plate XXXIII.

Figure 11. Site elevation – Caristie's drawing of theatre remains. Source: Caristie manuscript – Musée d' Orange, 1856.

With his work, we have the formalisation of a hypothetical reconstruction of the theatre at Orange. As director of works from 1835 to 1856, and especially through his publication of detailed engravings and study, he convinces his readers that his rendition is that of a "real" monument. He pulls together the previous documentation of the theatre, examples from Antiquity, and Vitruvius' tenets. All the while, he connects the intricacies of his etchings to the vividness of the *topoi* residing within the imagination in order to achieve this implicit goal.

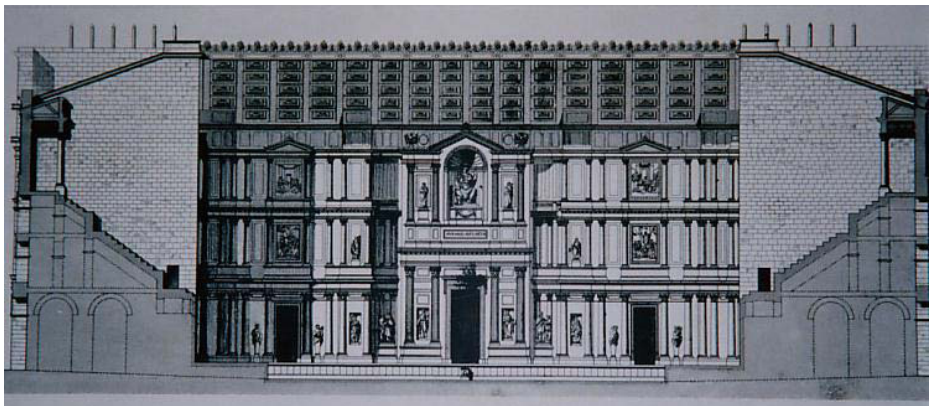

Figure 12. Caristie's reconstructed theatre. Source: Caristie, 1856, plate XLV.

Accepting the argument

Present-day readers will think of Caristie's book as just that: a book containing a hypothetical reconstruction. The publication, however, does not operate independently. Just after its completion, a man who has already been mentioned in relation to Mérimée and *Les Monuments Historiques* is working on a report of Caristie's work; Ludovic Vitet, the first *inspecteur général des monuments historiques* has taken interest in the theatre.[45] In a detailed report in the *Journal des Savants,* Vitet completely endorses Caristie's project and echoes his ideas, stressing the acceptance of the work.[46]

In a style that has by now become familiar, Vitet begins his report with a list of classical theatres, making the point that no other theatre is as important as that at Orange.[47] If the reader of Vitet's report has difficulty creating a mental image of the *cavea* at Orange, the examples will undoubtedly help to fill in the gaps. Now that the theatre of Orange has been accepted within the grouping of other "great" classical theatres, its *cavea* "exists"; the hypothetical model provided by Caristie is merely its confirmation. Vitet is beginning to set the tone for an argument for physical reconstruction. However, a further element of confidence is required to solidify the argument. After comparative discussions of some of the listed theatres, a detailed description of the remains, the recalling of a variety of authorities, Vitet evokes the *De architectura* in his discussion of stage machinery:[48] "Vitruvius himself took care to indicate where the stage machines were located and how many there were. There were three in all in each theatre …."[49]

If the reader is not, by then, convinced that Caristie's details should be accepted, the reference to some sort of duty to imagine helps. Vitet says that just as the imagination of children can work to transform baton-holding into an imaginary cavalry scene, so too can it—the imagination—accept the decor of the theatre. This is highly significant; there is a clear acknowledgement of the links between some of the components of the hypothetical solution of Caristie and the interpreter's imagination. With this notion accepted, it becomes easy to persuade the reader that the reconstruction is indeed plausible. After the digression on the child's imagination, Vitet writes: "Est-il besoin d'insister plus longtemps pour démontrer à nos lecteurs en quelle estime il faut tenir et les magnifiques restes du théâtre d'Orange, et l'ouvrage de M. Caristie qui les reproduit si bien." (Is it necessary to insist any longer to our readers as to the esteem which must hold the ruins of the theatre of Orange, and the work of M. Caristie who has reproduced these so well.)[50] He then suggests that, along with archaeological observation and historical and literary studies, more work of Caristie's type has to be undertaken to better understand ruins.[51]

The report ends with a reference to Millin, who whimsically described the *cavea* and first called for the removal of the hundred or so houses sited within. By Vitet's time, most of the homes are gone—"(g)râce à une heureuse application du principe de l'expropriation (et de l') inappréciable service rendu à la science…." (thanks to the great application of the principle of expropriation and the great service rendered to the science)[52] and the *cavea* is now ready to be re-constituted. Reflecting his influence, Vitet's *Journal des Savants* article is reprinted three years later in the first issue of the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*.[53] The clean illustration he includes attests to the *cavea*'s transformation since the engravings of the earlier part of the century.

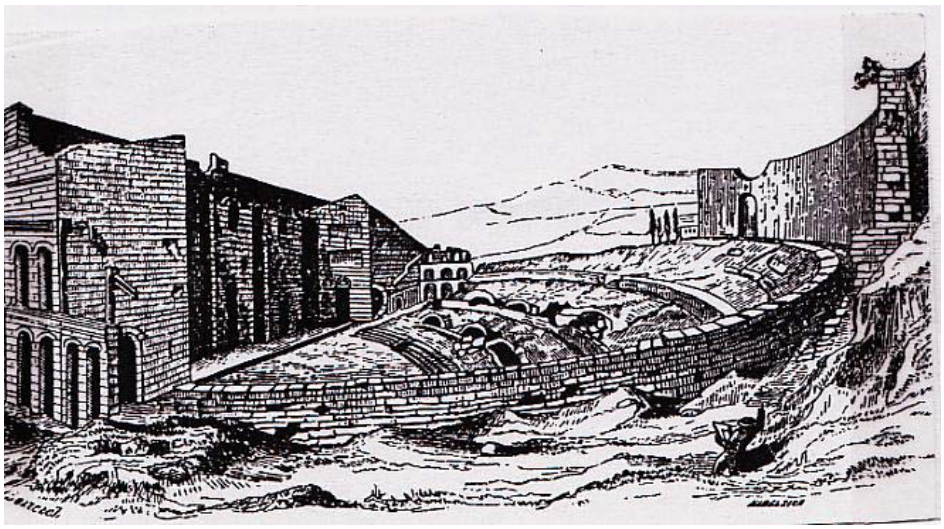

Figure 13. Vitet's Illustration of the theatre at Orange. Source: Vitet, 1861, 305.

A short time after Vitet drafted his report, another architect was working on the theatre and preparing another important study. Until then, the references to Vitruvius had been specific, although not dominant, within the Orange literature. G. Legrand[54] takes on the design of the theatre and connects it, explicitly and directly, to *De architectura*.[55] After the usual recalling of the ancients and a *summario* of the Latin theatre of Vitruvius, Legrand commends Caristie and then writes this most significant passage:
The disposition of the scaenae during stage representations appears to have thus far been scarcely studied; the physical elements no longer existing, and the information that the ancients have left us having been reduced to what Vitruvius wrote in a few sentences in his Book V, which has sometimes been interpreted by commentators with too much latitude. So as to avoid the same pitfalls, sirs, accompany us on an excursion to the theatre of Orange, to together make, Vitruvius in hand, the application of the text to the monument itself.[56]

Thus Legrand proposes an excursion to the theatre of Orange with *De architectura* in hand. With some 25 pages interspersed with dozens of links between the general tenets of Vitruvius (he provides a sketch of Vitruvius' Latin theatre—and the specific features of the Orange monument) he concludes that: "Le théâtre d'Orange est la pour justifier les conjectures du doute … [missing word in text] … du XVième siècle, et démontrer qu'il n'y a point d'erreur dans le texte de Vitruve".[57] So circular has the argument become that the theatre is now used to check *De architectura's* tenets.

On Caristie's work, Legrand simply states that "Nous n'avons pas la témérité de vouloir décrire cette admirable ruine; c'est une tache qui vient d'être si fidèlement rempli par Caristie qu'il n'est désormais plus possible de rien ajouter à l'oeuvre consciencieuse de ce savant architecte".[58] To Legrand, the authority of Caristie is as solid as Vitruvius' and there is nothing to add. When other architects (such as Louis Rogniat, Paul Blondel, and M. Daument)[59] undertake studies of the same monument, it is Caristie's text and engravings that persist.[60]

Constructing the theatre

From 1877 to 1883, Daumet, *architecte attaché à la Commission Supérieur des Monuments Historiques,* supervises substantial reconstruction work in the lower partitions of the western areas. As of 1882, the Formigés, father and son, take on the reconstruction project; the municipal government is keen on facilitating live spectacles within the space and the two architects hurriedly begin to rebuild the seats. The two lower sets of seats as well as many of their supporting structures are constructed, and we can see some of the progress with a first horizontal section partly in place in an 1880s engraving.[61]

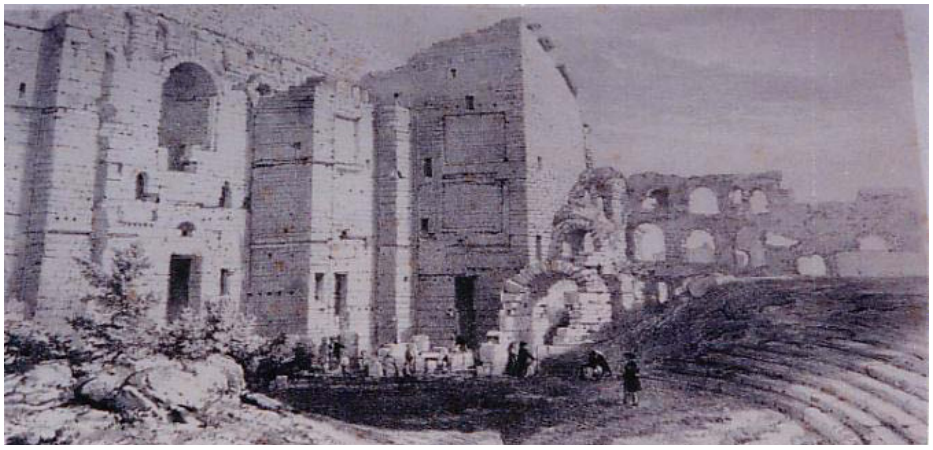

Figure 14. The theatre of Orange (1860s). Source: Album du Chemin de Fer de Lyon à la Méditérannée, 1860s, plate 12.

In the earlier part of the twentieth century, the son, Jules Formigé, builds the eastern section of the corridor leading to the inner *cavea* as well as a variety of features belonging to the *scaenae* wall and other components.

By the time Louis Chatelain writes his influential book for the *Bibliothèque des Hautes Études* in 1908, Caristie is fully accepted as the authority on Orange antiquities.[62] His work now serves as model, and the physically reconstructed areas re-confirm his "theorised' theatre. With the emphasis on ancient sources as authorities, Chatelain's book continues with what by the early twentieth century has become a tradition of including references, not necessarily to support particular views or arguments, but to render a feel of authority to the narrative.[63] As with his nineteenth century predecessors, Chatelain reverts to most of the earlier studies, all the while devoting a complete chapter on the theatre with Caristie as his primary source.[64]

Chatelain's theatre discussion is descriptive and comparative, looking at, for instance, the different dimensions given by the various previous researchers. Throughout his work, the implication is that this is the best preserved monument of its type. He writes: "Le théâtre d'Aspende, en Asie Mineure, est le seul qui soit à comparer avec celui d'Orange pour son excellente conservation".[65] Chatelain does not necessarily advance new perspectives, but he does hint at the extent to which the theatre is being constructed. In one passage he notes:
It is important to signal the precissenes of the restauration of this monument; Caristie employed only the stones from the quarries, still exploited, that had been used by the Romans. Such were the repairs undertaken following the plans of Caristie. It allows us to appreciate the talent of this architect, his vast archaeological knowledge, his respect for the original work, and his longstanding tenacity through which he surmounted many difficulties …[66]

The passage is probably the first to clearly connect the reconstruction efforts to the drawings of Caristie. The fact that the builders employ stones from the same quarries as those used by the Romans seems to make the reconstruction more "Roman". The whole of Chatelain's argument in favour of the Caristie restitution is

extremely circular, at first stating that Caristie's drawings are used as guides for the reconstruction, then inferring that the rebuilt monument reflects the original one, the only record of the "original" one is the hypothetically drawn model by Caristie in the first place. Near the end of the chapter, Chatelain presents a comparison between modern theatres and theatres of Antiquity. For the Antiquity discussion, the example is the theatre of Orange, complete with references to the textual authority: the *De architectura*.

As Vitet, Daumet, Chatelain, and others are studying and writing about the monument, the Formigés continue with their building activities. Jules Formigé publishes a number of related articles,[67] as well as a comprehensive research paper on the theatres at Arles and Orange.[68] The 65-page report is detailed and combines a plethora of references to Vitruvius with details of classical theatres to provide hypotheses for the missing architectural components of the theatre at Orange. Using this methodology, Formigé confirms most of Caristie's postulated model and fills in some of the missing details. Note that he often reverts to the theatre at Arles for comparative discussion and to "explain" his proposal rationales (the two to him share unique features). This no doubt has something to do with the fact that he is also in charge of the ongoing reconstruction of Arles' theatre.

The construction and consolidation work continues well into the 1950s and 1960s, when the inner passageways underneath the *cavea* seats are rebuilt due to construction problems arising from the workmanship of the earlier part of the twentieth century. In the end, the *cavea* is very much like that of Vitruvius'. The problem, and perhaps this is what Formigé was alluding to in his early comment, is that the new *cavea* does not fit the architecture of the *scaenae* building. Figure 15 highlights the connection point between the seats and *versurae* along the western section. The seating clearly does not align architectural realities of this visible section and the re-builders never completed the work. It would seem then, that the nineteenth and twentieth century designers left out an important detail when re-presenting the *cavea*. Equally interesting is that Vitruvius is silent regarding the connection points and angles.

Figure 15. Theatre at Orange – western section. Photo by author.

Through a cumulative set of depictions—textual, visual, and imaginative—a *monumental ensemble* inscribed onto the *World Heritage List*, and of *universal value, protected for the benefit of humanity*, has been constructed. With earth-clearing, the re-shaping of the terrain took place, with the demolishing of houses, blocks and cobbles were safeguarded for re-installation, and with public support, the expropriation of houses was facilitated. Throughout, the referencing of a variety of drawings that go back to the imaginary classical theatre of de la Pise (and perhaps Sangallo) ensured that the builders worked towards a particular plan. This plan was not necessarily drawn according to some original design, but traced from the instructions borne out of the classical architectural imaginations of individuals far removed from Antiquity. The whole, of course, was fuelled at each stage by increasing and inextricably woven references to *De architectura*, whose broad instructions permitted a circular mode of authentication that provided "proof" for the schemas.

Filling in the gaps between topographic features and architectural entities, however, clearly does not result in an accurate reconstruction. It results in a new design that smoothes away sets of details related to, in this case, first century AD (and perhaps earlier) culture, craft, and site. The design becomes topographically idyllic, geometrically corrected and architecturally adjusted. In this case, it is not surprising that the reconstruction by Caristie is akin to Vitruvius' tenets; the

former spent a great deal of time studying the latter and justifying the authoritative nature of *De architectura* before presenting the reconstruction and connecting it to the older treatise. The illustrations provided by his predecessors (those he accessed as he carried out his research) can be traced in part to de la Pise's drawing and description. Also, the corrections that he imposed on his theatre can be traced back to Vitruvius' *Book V*.

Conclusion

In France, classical monuments formed part of the restoration debate. The ideas of Viollet-le-Duc prevailed as architects from *Les Monuments Historiques* generated drawings, and as archaeologists produced knowledge directly connected to Rome and as Vitruvius' treatise served as a memory container for classical architecture. This was the case in Orange, where each new architect, archaeologist, or researcher looked to predecessors and to Vitruvius in presenting the same monument. Almost all of the proposals of the reconstructed theatre included consideration for Vitruvius' theatre prescriptions; a closer look at the immediate terrain would have revealed that the proposals were not necessarily adequate. This is not to say that the theatre of Orange's *cavea* was completely rebuilt. However, its reconstruction in such a dramatic way definitely and permanently altered the original design and architectural intent. The official sanctioning of the site as "historically valuable" added to the authenticating process, with the whole mediated through modes of authentication involving cumulative studies of specific monuments, textual references, and imaginative drawings.

With the study of classical monuments, the tendency is still to revert to comparative studies and to the authoritative textual references of *De architectura*. Classical archaeology has, and continues to, direct its attention to clearing, consolidating, and, eventually, reconstructing. The latter efforts somehow leave one with the impression and assurance that what is observed and preserved is genuine. In the end, the monument serves as confirmation for the textual reconstruction, and the text re-confirms the monument in a completely circular mode of authentication. Throughout, *De architectura* is mined for any hint, most often non-specific and highly generalised, of like features that might correspond to the monument under study. Through the proof that all of these provide, *De architectura* takes on further authoritative weight. The more the ruined monument is studied, the more Vitruvius is quoted. The result of this particular knowledge production is the potential for a set of architectural constructions that are at best, Vitruvius-based, and not necessarily site or reality-based.

Endnotes

[1]Pierre Nora Nora, Pierre ed., *Realms of Memory – The Construction of the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[2]A short version of this paper was read at the *Contained Memory* conference at Massey University in Wellington in December 2010. This paper has benefited from comments at the same conference session and further research. In addition, the paper has benefited from the double blind review process. A longer paper, further developing the main ideas is in progress.
[3]For a discussion on classical architectural training since the seventeenth century see Daniel M. Millette, "The Prix de Rome – Three Centuries in the Eternal City," in *The Prix de Rome in Architecture: A Retrospective,* ed. Marco Polo (Toronto, Coach House Books, 2006), 8-22.
[4]The city is mentioned by early chroniclers like Strabo (IV, 1, 11) and Pliny the Elder (III, 36), among others and its importance in Antiquity is without doubt. For a discussion of some of the early sources (albeit dated), see Louis Chatelain: "Les Monuments Romains d'Orange," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* 170 (1908), 1-122.
[5]The literature related to early Arausio and historical Orange is vast. For an albeit dated bibliography see Agis Rigord, "Bibliographie sur Orange et ses Monuments," *Bulletin des Amis d'Orange* (1964): 36-46.
[6]The technical and architectural features of the theatre have been recorded by several scholars. See for example: F. Sear, *Roman Theatres – An Architectural Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 245-47. See also P. Gros, *L'Architecture romaine – Les monuments publics* (Paris: Picard, 2002), 272-73. A more comprehensive publication is underway directed by J. Ch. Moretti and A. Badi. On decor, see N. Janon, M. Janon and M. Kilmer, "Les frises d'Orange: le pouvoir mis en scène," in *Spectacula – II. Le théâtre et ses Spectacles – Actes du colloque tenu au Musée Archéologique Henri Prades de Lattes les 27, 28, 29 et 30 avril 1989*, ed. C. Landes (Lattes: Musée de Lattes, 1992), 149-62. For related context, see E. Rosso, "Le message religieux des statues divines et impériales dans les théâtres romains : approche contextuelle et typologique," in *Fronts de scène et lieux de culte dans le théâtre antique*, ed. J. Ch. Moretti (Lyon: Université de Lyon, 2009), 89-126.
[7][UNESCO – This monumental ensemble is inscribed onto the World Heritage List. The inscription onto the list signifies the universal and exceptional value of a cultural or natural entity so that it may be protected to the benefit of humanity. Antique Theatre of Orange. World Heritage.] (All translations from this point on are by the author.)
[8]Michel-Édouart Bellet, *Orange antique – Monuments et musée* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication et des Grands Travaux, 1991).
[9]Ibid., 30. "Cet édifice, comme celui d'Arles, présente toutes les composantes du théâtre latin selon Vitruve : la *cavea* en hémicycle à escaliers radiaux, les accès latéraux, le mur de scène à ordres décoratifs superposés et les *parascaenia.*"
[10]For a summary on the research on the burn marks and related phenomena see P.

Milner, "Further Studies of the Roman Theatre at Orange – A Progress Report for Dr. M. Woehl," *Technology Note*, No. TN-00/1 (2000).

[11]The tower was demolished in the early 1830s. See Prosper Mérimée, *Notes d'un voyage dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: 1835), 113. See also, Louis Chatelain, "Les Monuments Romains d'Orange," in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* 170 (1908): 89.

[12]Jean Bouveyroy, "*Discours des entiquitéz de la ville dorange*," *Archives Municipales d'Orange* Z 1174 (August 24, 1649).

[13]Ibid., *ddd*. Note also that a Monuments Historiques plaque installed onto the building wall indicates that the *cavea* was freed from houses built within it during the Middle Ages.

[14]Ibid. *dd, ddd, eee*.

[15]Joseph de la Pise, *Tableau de l'histoire des Princes et Principauté d'Orange Divisé en quatre parties selon les quatre races qui ont regné souverainement depuis l'an 793. Commençant a Gvillavme av Cornet Premier Prince d'Orange. Jusques a Frederish Henry de Nassau à prefent Regnant* (La Haye: De l'Imprimerie de Théodore Maire, 1640).

[16]Reference to Varro is on page 16.

[17]Sangallo was not alone in the comparative tradition; I use him as an example among many.

[18]See Olivier Poisson, "Le dégagement et la restauration des théâtres antiques d'Orange et d'Arles au début du XIXe siècle," in *Exposition: Le Gout du Théâtre à Rome et en Gaule Romaine*, ed. C. Landes (Lattes: Musée de Lattes; Imago, 1989) 82-90.

[19]"… sur l'emplacement des gradins, une cinquantaine de masures se pressaient les unes contre les autres ; deux rues et deux impasses y donnaient accès,". Quoted in Chatelain (1980): 89. While I use Millin and others in my reading of the literature, I do not purport that they are the only references to the monument. They are, however, typical.

[20]On the Napoleon Cadastre see François Monnier, "Cadastre," in *Dictionnaire Napoléon* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1987) 318-20.

[21]Aubin-Louis Millin, *Voyage dans les départemens du midi de la France – Tome II* (Paris: l'Imprimerie Impériale, 1807). While I use Millin and others in my reading of the literature, I do not purport that they are the only references to the monument. They are, however, typical.

[22]Millin devotes some 22 pages to Orange.

[23]A direct reference is made in footnote 1, page 149.

[24]Ibid., 148. "… partie circulaire dans laquelle les siéges des spectateurs étoient établis".

[25]Ibid., 149. [Vitruvius expresses construction of this type.]

[26]The lower parts of the *scaenae* building are also occupied by boutiques and, as well, the *bâtiment de scène* itself is used as a prison. That a prison occupies the *bâtiment de scène* is confirmed within the municipal archives; a municipal record entry of 1824, for example, states that "Le Conseil souligne que la prison qui est

dans l'enceinte du Théâtre et dont l'installation est défectueuse devrait être au plus tôt transférée ailleurs." [The Council underlines that the prison which is inside the theatre is defective and should be, as soon as possible, moved elsewhere.] See Raphaël Massé, *Annales d'Orange* (Orange: 1950), 30.

[27]Vitruvius' Latin theatre model is fully elaborated elsewhere; see F. Sear, "Vitruvius and Roman Theatre Design," *American Journal of Archaeology* 2(94), 249-58.

[28]Towards the end of his Orange entry, Millin suggests that the houses and prison should be removed. He wrote: "Ce seroit rendre un service réel aux arts et à l'humanité , que de chercher un autre logement pour les prisonniers , et de détruire ces misérables masures , dont on dédommageroit facilement les propriétaires" (151). The suggestion to demolish the buildings would be recalled by his contemporaries; the reference to a "service to humanity" would be echoed by UNESCO a century later.

[29]De Gasparin, *Histoire de la ville d'Orange et ses Antiquités* (Orange: Joseph Bouchony Imprimeur, 1815).

[30]Ibid., 68. He mentions Strabo, for instance.

[31]Ibid., 73. The theatres at Delos, Syracuse, Sparta, Athens, and others are enumerated.

[32]De Gasparin references la Pise on pages 65 and 101; Millin is noted on page 102 in footnote 14.

[33]P. Renaux is *architecte de département de Vaucluse* at least until 1841.

[34]Ibid., 1, 2.

[35]Ibid., 2. [When their position has been recognized and defined by the architect, the blocks that are in the workers' way will be removed and deposited in an area designated by the contractor.]

[36]Remains were found at the top of the *cavea*; it is not clear, however, if a gallery had been part of the original design.

[37]*De architectura*, V, 9.9.

[38]Mérimée and Vitet maintained a long-lasting collaboration; the two worked together as late as the 1860s within, for example, the editorial ranks of the *Journal des Savants*.

[39]Prosper Mérimée, *Notes d'un voyage dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: 1835).

[40]Ibid., 114.

[41]Ibid., 112, 113.

[42]Ibid,. 113. [If we do not hurry to undertake major repairs, France may not possess for long, this monument that is almost unique in its class.]

[43]See André Louis, "A Paper Conservancy," in *La Revue* 10 (Paris: Musée des arts et des métiers, 1995), 25-29.

[44]Auguste Caristie, *Monuments Antiques Orange – Arc de Triomphe et Théâtre – Publiés sous les auspices de S. E. M. le Ministre de l'État* (Paris: 1856). "En 1820, étant sur le toit de la maison qui était adossée à cette partie de l'édifice, il m'a été possible de mesurer et de dessiner cette corniche avec facilité"; he is studying the theatre in detail. Footnote 1.

[45]Recall that Mérimée had succeeded Vitet as *inspecteur général des monuments historiques* in 1834.

[46]*Archives Municipales d'Orange* – Manuscript T. A. 20: Ludovic Vitet *Compte rendu de l'ouvrage de M. Caristie sur les monuments d'Orange*, 1859(a). This manuscript is almost identical to a section of a two-part journal article published in the same year in the *Journal des Savants* (1859(b)), 325-36, 430-43; it is possible that the handwritten manuscript is not of Vitet's hand and is a transcription of the article. While I here use the manuscript as reference, the words in the manuscript are the same as those of the article.

[47]Ludovic Vitet, *Compte rendu de l'ouvrage de M. Caristie sur les monuments d'Orange*, (Orange: Archives Municipales d'Orange, 1859) 1.

[48]Vitet develops a similar argument in his "De quelques moulages d'après l'antique exposés à l'école des Beaux-Arts," *Journal des Savants* (1861): 376-86.

[49]Ibid., 10. "Vitruve lui-même a soin de nous détromper en indiquant quelle place occupaient ces machines et quel en était le nombre. Il y en avait trios en tout dans chaque theatre."

[50]Ibid., 12.

[51]Ibid., 12.

[52]Ibid., 25.

[53]Ludovic Vitet, "Monuments antiques de la Ville d'Orange," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (1861): 297-310.

[54]G. Legrand, *Recherches sur la scène antique justifié par l'étude du théâtre d'Orange* (Orange: undated manuscript). I base the post-Vitet/Caristie date on the fact that Legrand refers to Vitet's 1859 report (footnote a, 40) and to Caristie's 1859 publication (footnote b, 14); they are the latest works he references.

[55]Ibid., 3. Legrand uses the 1673 and 1680 French translations by Perrault (footnote b).

[56]Ibid., 14. "La disposition de la scène pendant la representation nous parrait avoir été peu étudiée jusqu'ici; les elements matériels de cette étude n'existent plus et les données que les auteurs anciens ont laissées à ce sujet, se réduisent à quelques phrases peu explicites du Vième livre de Vitruve, auxquelles les commentateurs ont, peut-être donné un peu trop d'élasticité. … Pour ne pas nous laisser entrainer dans la même voie, veuillez, Messieurs, nous accompagner dans une excursion au théâtre d'Orange, pour faire ensemble, Vitruve à la main, l'application du texte au monument lui même."

[57]Ibid., 44. [The theatre of Orange is there to justify the conjectures of doubt … of the fifteenth century, and to show that there are no points of error in the text of Vitruvius.]

[58]Ibid., 14. [We do not dare describe this admirable ruin; the task has so faithfully been accomplished by Caristie that it is no longer possible to add anything to the work of this brilliant architect.]

[59]Correspondence from Louis Rogniat to the Mayor of Lyon dated January 23, 1883; Archives de Lyon document 4j4 wp25.

[60]References to Caristie-as-authority persisted throughout the nineteenth century; see for example Camille Saint-Saëns, *Décors de Théâtre Dans l'Antiquité Romaine* (Paris: L. Baschet, 1886).
[61]Conseil d'Europe, *Orange – Théâtre Antique – Analyses des Experts Européens* (Conseil d'Europe, 1993).
[62]Louis Chatelain, "Les Monuments Romains d'Orange" in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études*, cent soixante-dixième fascicule (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1908).
[63]Ibid., 3-6.
[64]Among others not included in this discussion, de Gasparin is footnoted throughout, la Pise is referenced at 119, Mérimée at 90, 91, 96, and Renaux at 92. Caristie is evoked throughout the book.
[65]Ibid., 98 [The theatre at Aspendos, in Asia Minor, is the only one that can compare to that at Orange for its excenlent conservation.]
[66]Ibid., 94. "Il importe de signaler l'exactitude minutieuse de la restauration du monument… Caristie n'a employé que les pierres dont les carrières, encore exploitées, avaient été mises à contribution par les Romains. … Telles furent les réparations exécutées sur les plans de Caristie. Elles permettent d'apprécier le talent dont a fait preuve cet architecte, sa vaste érudition archéologique, son respect de l'œuvre originale, et la longue ténacité avec laquelle, sans se laisser rebutter, il a surmonté des difficultés sans nombre …"
[67]Jules Formigé publishes a set of articles related to the monuments of Orange in the *Bulletin des Antiquaires de France* (1924): 25, 26, 27 29; and *L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1914): 16, 17, 33.
[68]Jules Formigé, *Remarques diverses sur les théâtres Romains à propos de ceux d'Arles et d'Orange,* Extrait des mémoire présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Tome XIII (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1914).

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