Laugier vs Durand: Revisiting Primitive Hut in the Classical Architectural Discourse

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Abstract

Finding an origin of architecture describes a process of inquiry which embodies itself in the term of 'primitive hut'. This inquiry starts with Marcus Pollio Vitruvius from the antiquity and evolves into skepticism and rationalism of the Enlightenment Age. Quatrémere de Quincy, Viollet-le-Duc, William Chambers, Jacques-François Blondel and Claude Nicolas Ledoux, who were the important figures of the era, discussed the question of architectural origin differently. However, Marc-Antoine Laugier and Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, another two important figures of the Enlightenment, developed different aspects to the question with regard to their arguments on developmental process of the primitive hut. Their different viewpoints require a further investigation since these two 18th century French architectural theoreticians have fictionalize their objectives of 'ideal architecture' and 'true beauty' from the metaphor of the primitive hut.

Keywords: Origin of Architecture, Primitive Hut, The Enlightenment, Laugier, Durand.

Laugier Durand'a Karşı: Klasik Mimari Söylemde İlkel Kulübeyi Yeniden Ziyaret

Özet

Mimarlığın kökenini bulmak, antik dönemde Marcus Pollio Vitruvius ile başlayan ve kendini 'ilkel kulübe' teriminde var eden bir sorgulama sürecini tariflemektedir. Bu sorgulama süreci, özellikle Aydınlanma Çağı ile beraber analitik ve rasyonel sorgulama içerisinde, Quatrémere de Quincy, Viollet-le-Duc, William Chambers, Jacques-François Blondel ve Claude Nicolas Ledoux, gibi birçok önemli figür tarafından en çok tartışılan kavramlardan biri olmuştur. Ancak bu isimler arasında iki önemli mimarlık kuramcısı Marc-Antoine Laugier ve Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, mimarlığın kökenini kurguladıkları ilkel kulübenin oluşum sürecine dair iki farklı kurgu sunmuşlardır. 18. Yüzyıl Fransa'sının bu iki önemli mimarlık kuramcısı, 'ideal mimarinin' ve ulaşılması istenen 'gerçek güzelliğin' ne olduğunun temellerini ilkel kulübe metaforu üzerinden kurguladıkları için bu iki farklı görüş, karşılaştırmalı bir araştırmayı gerektirmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mimarlığın Kökeni, İlkel Kulübe, Aydınlanma, Laugier, Durand.

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Preface

In scope of this research, it is aimed to investigate two extreme viewpoints asserted by Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713-1769) and Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand (1760-1834) regarding the quest of the origin of architecture for those two stands on very debatable opposing positions. This debate on the matter of defining a preliminary building type requires further investigation since Laugier and Durand propose a contrast in their perspectives regarding the issues of simplicity, beauty, imitation and the 'true' objective of 'ideal' architecture. Regardless of their differences in theory; both Laugier and Durand are known due to their important contributions to the Enlightenment's architectural knowledge since they questioned a long-lasting tradition generated by strict proportions and ratios. In one respect, they were after finding the true essence of architecture neglected from the Renaissance tradition. This departure can be interpreted as the quest for beauty. For the Renaissance, beauty in architecture could be reached by means of geometry; and in this regard, the geometry was the perfect interpretation and imitation of the antiquity. However, in addition to the change in social life and beliefs, the Enlightenment provided a new tradition of philosophical and scientific thinking for intellectual as well. The reasoning of the age was based on the idea of finding highest human value and the origin of architecture affected by it (Culafić, 2010: 46).

Before Laugier's Hut: Vitruvius and the Dwelling House

Finding an origin for architecture, therefore, has been a very appealing field of interest for architects and philosophers of the Enlightenment. The need for justifying the form of a building has forced the theorists to go back to the references from Vitruvius's descriptions concerning the origins of "the dwelling house" (Vitruvius, 1960). In the *De Architectura* (Ten Books of Architecture), Vitruvius describes the origin of the dwelling house that was derived from discovery of fire that gave rise ancient men to social intercourse around it. As they kept coming together, their number increased. As a consequence of this, a necessity of gathering under a covered place occurred. Neither caves nor woods and groves fulfilled their needs. Finally their ability to use their hands and reasoning the surrounding

environment helped them to construct by themselves. Since they were born in the wild, the search for a place to sit comfortably close to fire and being protected at the same time resulted in shelter with improving standards. That was such an improvement that it helped the man to move from "barbarism" to "civilization" (Vitruvius, 1960: 38, 41).

In Vitruvius's opinion, the origin of architecture has started from this basic building. Under the advanced expertise of the men, the basic shelter transfers into "dwelling house". Vitruvius illustrates and originates these houses from foreign tribes where they had been shaped in conjunction with environmental conditions and materials provided from nature. He describes them as follows:

That houses […], we can see for ourselves from the buildings that are to this day constructed of like materials by foreign tribes […], roofed with oak shingles or thatched. Among [one of those tribes], […], they lay down entire trees flat on the ground to the right and the left, leaving between them a space to suit the length of the trees, and then place above these another pair of trees, resting on the ends of the former and at right angles with them. These four trees enclose the space for the dwelling. Then upon these they place sticks of timber, one after the other on the four sides, crossing each other at the angles, and so, proceeding with their walls of trees laid perpendicularly above the lowest, they build up high towers. The interstices, which are left on account of the thickness of the building material, are stopped up with chips and mud. As for the roofs, by cutting away the ends of the crossbeams and making them converge gradually as they lay them across, they bring them up to the top from the four sides in the shape of a pyramid. They cover it with leaves and mud, and thus construct the roofs of their towers in a rude form of the 'tortoise' style (Vitruvius, 1960: 39-40).

From the quotation above, it can be understood that Vitruvius regarded early beginnings of dwellings as having been shaped by natural forces and inherited materials. As early men made progress in construction, their expertise resulted in advanced buildings. He interprets human reasoning as an agency which has helped men to advance on constructing –not only in terms of the periphery of a

dwelling but also its fundamental architectural elements. As stated by Stephen Frith (2004: 39), Vitruvius's story regarding the origins of the dwelling has started a long-lasting debate on re-creation of architectural origins. Through his narrative, the dwelling house becomes a symbol of the origin of architecture; for this reason the construction of the first shelter has been illustrated repetitively in the translations or different editions of the *De Architectura* (Image 1). This symbol can be interpreted as an allegory of Vitruvius's idea concerning his architectural beauty which has been constructed on a social discourse and is intensified with the architectural orders.

Image 1. Two woodcuts from *Vitruvius Teutsch* illustrating Vitruvius's narrative of dwelling.

The Ideal Model of Architecture: Laugier and La Petite Cabane Rustique

In the eighteenth century, a former Jesuit priest *Abbé* Marc-Antoine Laugier took this rhetoric meaning as a foundation. In 1753, Laugier published his first treatise entitled *Essai sur l'Architecture*. Two years after, the extended edition of the treatise and the English translation 'Essay on Architecture' were published. Within the context of the treatise, Laugier's effort is to define an "ideal" architecture evolving around his observations and suggestions regarding architectural aesthetics. He describes his general principles of architecture, its elements and its orders: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian –those of which he prefers to talk about.[1]   In the first chapter Laugier tells a story of a primitive man –a short scene from the man's life in pastoral. The man wants to find an enduring place without the any guidance but his natural instincts. Neither a green turf he finds nor the wood and cave gives man the protection and the comfort that he needs. In the end, he finds four strong branches lying on the ground, binds them together by disposing a formal square. Above he puts four more horizontal pieces and later raises a roof covered with mud and leaves. By doing this he creates his "shelter" in order to protect himself from the outer effects in the nature (Laugier, 1755: 9-11). In the narration of the man's experimental hut construction, Laugier implies an idea of simple nature, in this sense he follows Vitruvius –the traces of ancient Greek architecture. He introduces his *la petite cabane rustique*[2] to formulate his interpretation regarding the origin of architecture. "The little rustic cabin I have just described" says Laugier; "is the model upon which all the magnificence of architecture have been imagined, it is in coming near in the execution of the simplicity of this first model, that we avoid all essential defects, that we lay hold on true perfection (Laugier, 1755: 11-12)". Thus for Laugier, a rustic cabin ought to be regarded as the representation of human intellect in his survival –architect should accept the hut and its essential elements as the most "perfect" imitation of nature. In this composition the four branches symbolize *colonne* (column), the horizontal pieces upon them are *entablements* (entablatures) and finally the roof on top appears as *fronton* (pediment) (Laugier, 1753: 13). According to this, he is in the opinion that in all other elements of architecture, only those three can enter into architectural composition since "beauty" can only be consisted of them (Laugier, 1755: 12-13). This time, the notion of beauty is regarded under a romantic philosophy. In comparison with Vitruvius's tribal men from different regions of the world, Laugier's imaginary man finds the essence of beauty in nature, in the form of a cabin.

The charm of the cabin for Laugier can be interpreted as for its simplicity in the way of representing a basic architectural formation wherein he eliminates arches or pedestals and leaves doors and windows only for the functional necessity (Laugier, 1755: 13, 52). This formation can mean that he was in favor of purifying architecture in a rationalist framework. Since his descriptions are

representing a natural and functional expression, he also promotes the cabin as a model for architecture: "If each of these three parts is found placed in the situation and with the form which is necessary for it, there will be nothing to add; for the work is perfectly done (Laugier, 1755: 13)".

This argument can be proven through another perspective without reading any aforementioned definitions given by him. The second edition and the translation of the treatise both open with relatively similar engravings. The former, the extended French version which was published in 1755, has a frontispiece wherein a goddess figure (the genius of architecture) points out a hut to a man; whereas in the latter which was published in the same year, a group of men in the state of a more collective construction process can be seen (Image 2). Despite the fact that these two engravings resemble different interpretations of two different artists; they both indicate the same idea in common: All the true principles of architecture and its essential elements were descended from the rustic cabin.

Image 2. Two engravings which were appeared as frontispieces in different editions of the *Essai*.

To embody this model, he introduces a real monument: *Maison Carrée* –an exceptional example from the Romans. The temple is such an admiring example of the ancients, therein all the true principles of architecture have been disposed as the representation of the true and ideal model of architecture (Laugier, 1755: 13). Oblong plan of the temple is respected as the primitive man's "formal square"; columns, entablatures and the pediment are considered as inextricable parts of this simple model.

Laugier finds a different platform to continue and expand his discussion on the model. As a former priest, he visits a well-known environment to demonstrate his model: churches. Public buildings; palaces, hotels and monumental portals of Paris are also discussed by him but not as much as he pays attention to religious buildings. This focus given by Laugier can be approved from Wolfgang Herrmann's book 'Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory'. In the book, he explains that despite Laugier was not trained to become an architect; he had attended to civil and military architecture classes during his education in Jesuits. As a result of this, he became very familiar with the Gothic and the Baroque churches of the order (Herrmann, 1962: 2-3). Therefore in the *Essai sur l'Architecture*, after aforementioned principles of architecture, Laugier's main criticism and suggestions are on church architecture and applying the three essential elements to it. In similar to the hut; his church combines the following attributions of the three elements: In a "Latin" crossed plan; the columns are perpendicular and detached; the entablatures rest upon the columns in plat-bands and the pediments are not upon the breadth of the building; they are placed always above the entablature (Laugier, 1755: 16, 30, 36, 202-204).

According to Herrmann (1962: 117-118), Laugier's execution of his idea to reach ideal beauty influenced Jacques-Germain Soufflot remarkably. He states that the architect was certainly familiar with the *Essai*, for the reason Soufflot's biographer has called Laugier as "the forerunner of Soufflot's innovations at *Ste Geneviéve* (later known as *Panthéon Français*)" (Herrmann, 1962: 117-118). Importance of the church for France first comes from its name, the patron saint of Paris and building a worship place named after him. Second, its architecture is regarded by Allan Braham (1989: 32) as a "decisive break with the (former) tradition". According to Harry Francis Mallgrave (2005: 10), two attributions of the church aroused great interest for the eighteenth century. The former was its detached columned entrance; the latter was the flat entablature of the nave which is supported by freestanding columns. Not only due to the design of Soufflot, but also the church is

very significant for Perrault's possible effect on the colonnade and Quatrémere de Quincy's role in the programmatic transformation of it (Braham, 1989: 5 and Lavin, 1992). *Ste Geneviéve* therefore, is considered as both a physical example of Laugier's theory in church architecture and a place where one can see a proper application of fundamental elements asserted by him (Image 3). With detached columns, straight entablatures and a correctly positioned pediment, *Ste Geneviéve* reflects Laugier's three essential elements of the cabin and stands on a very interesting place in the discussion of this paper since Durand also takes the buildings to demonstrate his theoretical aspects regarding the true elements of ideal architecture.
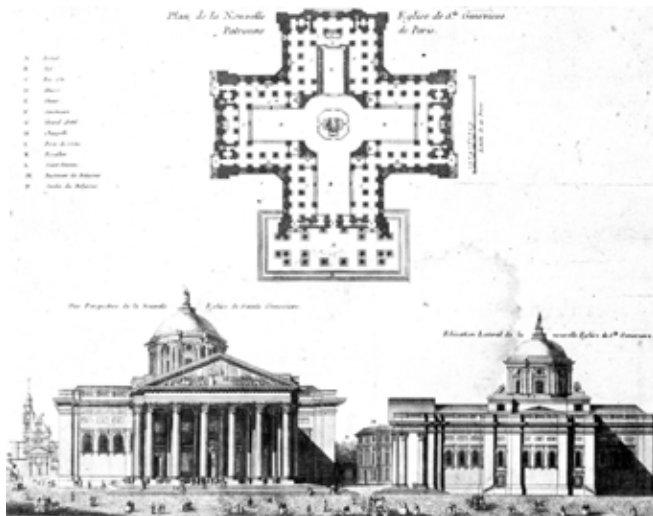

Image 3. The first draft of the *Ste Geneviéve* from 1756.

In the *Essai*, Laugier brings the idea of an architecture rooted in nature as well as presents the cabin as a structure to formalize the present's architecture for the first time (Herrmann, 1962: 48). As stated before, Laugier's historical context was an epoch in which a shift from Italian Renaissance to the Enlightenment had seen. Fil Hearn (2003: 7) interprets the period a "controversy between the ancients and the moderns over the use of proportion in the classical orders". In other words, Laugier and his contemporaries were after finding a rational basis for architectural elements and its orders that is derived from the classical discourse. As a consequence, he followed the traces of rustic principles of architecture and therefore he gave level of supremacy to Greek antiquity for its perfect imita-

tion of nature. To him, every action against nature was "a bad invention", and this proscription constituted a relation of simplicity and beauty provided by it (Laugier, 1755: 3, 29). As Hermann (1962: 28-29) states, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, simplicity was understood as "a definite quality which was demanded to counteract the disrupting effects of the Baroque and Rococo"; in other words a definite quality was provided by abandoning all ornamental overloads. Similarly, in the *Essai*, Laugier forced the architect to keep his designs simple and natural since it was the only road to beauty. His theoretical attitude advocated for defining a new architectural path by the guidance of the primitive model and its principles rooted from the classical discourse.

Although Laugier never calls his little rustic cabin a different name; in the architectural literature, the term always appears as 'the primitive hut'. This genealogy of the term indicates that different actors were also interested in placing the primitive hut as a beginning for architecture. In the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment, important architect and theorists such as Quatrémere de Quincy, Viollet-le-Duc, Chambers, Blondel and Ledoux sought for the origin of architecture in the rustic past and asserted different types of primitive huts. On a common ground, they all have followed Vitruvius's dwelling house on the belief of that the primitive hut was a rhetoric of the first model of architecture (Image 4). For instance, Sir William Chambers investigates the origin and the process of building in a very familiar environment to Laugier's. In 'A Treatise on the Decorative Parts of Civil Architecture', Chambers claims that first attempts of buildings were the results of the mankind's desire. As the groups of men who lived in colonies increased, they were forced to search for better shelters and living conditions. A conic shape shelter covered with leaves or rushes was the primitive hut. Once the men had discovered different materials and needed to customize the hut according to accommodation, security or storage needs, they fixed the conic shape and changed it into cube (Chambers, 1759: 77-78). Chambers considers the orders, the decorative part of the building, were descended from the construction of the hut for when the men gave up using the wood and gradually became an expert on more solid

materials like stone; they had nothing to imitate, "they naturally copied the parts which necessity introduced in the primitive hut" (Chambers, 1759: 81). Once again, the origin of architecture appears as in the form of the primitive hut which is also an agency of the justification of origin of architecture and the orders that adorn the neoclassical buildings.
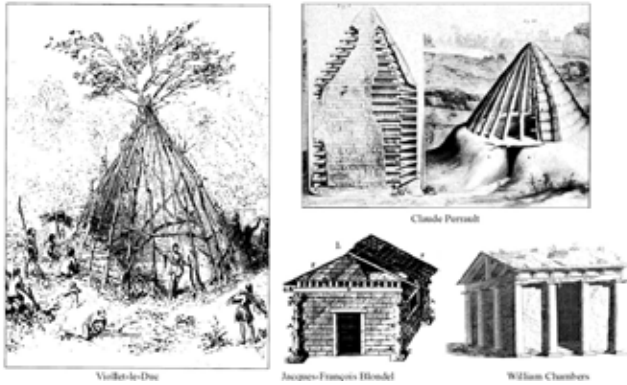

Image 4. Different illustrations of the primitive hut after Vitruvius's description.

Rationalization of architecture: Durand's attack on Laugier

However Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand was in the opinion of something else, something controversial by rejecting all the justifications suggested by Laugier in terms of the primitive hut and the others; and giving the assertion of the hut was not a natural object and architecture didn't need the orders. Unlike Laugier, Durand was trained to become an architect and he started his career under the influences of the French Revolution in 1789. In 1794, he was hired to teach at École Polytechnique and between the years of 1802 and 1805, he published *Précis des Leçons d'Architecture* (Précis of the Lectures on Architecture) which was also the summary of the content of his courses at the École (Mallgrave, 2005: 68-69).

In the book 'On Adam's House in Paradise', Joseph Rykwert (1981: 42-43) explains Durand's system of architecture as an economic one that rests on a solid basis which scorns writers who believed that origin of architecture was derived either from the imitation of the human body or from the primitive hut; thereby Durand's the most prominent criticism and sarcasm was on Laugier. After the

Revolution, rationalization and rejecting any dogmatic tradition was seen in all arts as well as seen in architecture. The critical attitude and inquiry appeared as one of the characteristic features of 'revolutionary' architects like Durand. Since the École Polytechnique was an advanced engineering school, in following the scientific environment of the school: "Durand was charged with providing the rudiments of architectural training, more practical than theoretical in nature. This task allowed Durand to rethink the classical underpinnings of architecture, or rather to reassess classical architecture's social relevance to modern industrial society (Mallgrave, 2005: 69)".

This means that the framework in which the *Précis* was written, gave Durand an opportunity to evaluate the classical discourse towards his theoretical foundations. Antoine Picon, introductory author of the book's recent edition, identifies Durand's departure from as "the exhaustion of the classical tradition based on the teachings of Vitruvius" (Durand, 2000:15). In order to understand Durand's theoretical background, Picon asserts the qualities of the Enlightenment culture. Empiricism, critical attitude to any tradition devoid from reasoning or rationality and the discovery of exotic cultures have provided a context to falsify all classical criterions which had been never questioned before (Durand, 2000: 15-16).

Durand's introduction of the *Précis* starts with defining an objective of architecture which will shape all his arguments coming after. According to that, the main objective of architecture is "composition and execution of public and private buildings" (Durand, 2000: 77). Since Durand is in favor of binding architectural studies through a simple and natural correlation, the usual triple division of beauty (distribution, construction and decoration) of the Neoclassicism becomes defective (Durand, 2000: 78). Despite the first two is rather to be elevated; *décoration* (decoration) takes its place as Durand's primary objection combining with the discussion of the primitive hut. To him, ornamentation which was provided by the ancient tradition of the orders is inconceivable for he believes that "no one can decorate without money; and it follows that the more one decorates, the more one spends" (Durand, 2000: 79). Whereas to Laugier, the proper use of ornaments in

buildings is necessary. He states, "the beauty of the buildings depends chiefly on three things: the exactness of the proportions, the elegancy of the forms, and the choice and disposition of the ornaments (Laugier, 1755: 119)".

During the neoclassicism, architectural theorists like Laugier were in the opinion of architects should hold on the truth of that beauty and convenience of a building were strictly depended on a correct imitation of nature. This imitation was being reflected by the use of the orders and adornment. But for Durand, if imitation is a means of assigning an aim to architecture, indeed it must be rooted from nature however; this proposition makes him to go back to the very beginning of architecture and to question whether the first hut was a natural object. In the book, this inquiry is developed by comparing Laugier and Vitruvius' quotations regarding the primitive hut, its three essential elements and the orders coming from so-called human proportions. Durand proceeds to give a refutation which proves that Greeks' system of using the length of a man's foot comparing to his body does not provide an accurate proportional ratio with the base and the height of the column. At the end of this falsification of human body-the orders-the primitive hut equation, Durand ends his argumentation in order to give priority to his model of pleasing users by means of architecture whose aim should be public and private *utilité* (utility) rather than necessity and decoration alone (Durand, 2000: 84) –a situation in which he sees Laugier was in. According to Picon, in the context of the Enlightenment culture, utility was bound to the idea of humanity's beginning (Durand, 2000: 15). This connection helps one to understand the question of utility as a reference to the origin of architecture; hence to Laugier and to the primitive hut. As stated before, Laugier's rustic cabin was an allegory to represent the essential elements of true architecture. Proper use of the orders and accurately applied adornment were to generate beauty. On the contrary, Durand's revolutionary architecture was based on the idea of rationalization of building by applying two principles: *convenance* (fitness) and *economié* (economy) to the construction (Durand, 2000: 84). Therefore he has little interest on the theory of imitation of nature and decoration of building by means of the orders; only focuses the beauty generated from the two principles of architecture.

His disbelief on the assumption of the orders derived from nature forces Durand to disregard the primitive hut constructed with them as a natural object (Durand, 2000: 82). Unlike Laugier, he advocates for the first intention to build the hut, without taking decoration as a principle concern, was the inquiry of builder who was seeking for a shelter to escape "inclement weather and wild beasts" in nature (Durand, 2000: 83). This also can be understood as Durand's emphasis on a conceptual gap between the primitive hut and execution of buildings, in other words separating groundless claims from reason. In finding the primitive hut itself to be an unnatural object, Durand is essentially undermining the idea that architecture can find its origins allegorically in nature or in man; instead he rejects the origins as reliable ground for architecture. Therefore in the case of Durand, the romantic spirit of Laugier is interpreted as having lost its validity and the notion of beauty is reconstructed under a rational and scientific meaning.

In order to prove his theory, he takes *Ste Geneviéve* in Paris as an example.[3] To him, "[…] in the building in question, all idea of decoration had been set aside in order to dispose it in the fittest and most economical way, the result would have been a building a far more likely to produce the desired effect". This Greek cross planned building was covering a limited area with total 206 columns in the portico and the dome as well as in the interior (Durand, 2000: 86). According to this quantitative attribution, he evaluates the abundant number of columns and improper use of building base as being uneconomical. His suggestions of disposition of the building as in the form of a rotunda propose a new functionalist approach to the era's design tradition by decreasing the quantity of columns to 112 and enlarging building base to almost two times larger (Image 5). By this way, he claims that he was able to create something fit and economical, instead of having trying to reach the beauty generated by extravagancy (Durand, 2000: 87). To understand the idea behind this new display better, an explanation given by Alberto Pérez-Gómez (1992) can be examined. In the last chapter of his book 'Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science', he focuses on Durand's relation with functionalist theory and utilitarianism he assert-

ed. "In Durand's theoretical context," says Pérez-Gómez:

The simple geometrical solids used as prototypes in architectural projects lost their symbolic meanings; they became signs of the new values, the "formal language" of technology. Durand was convinced that simple forms that were easy to perceive produced some pleasure in the observer. Such forms were to be used because they correspond essentially to those conceptions already shaped by rules of economy (Perez-Gomez, 1992: 303).
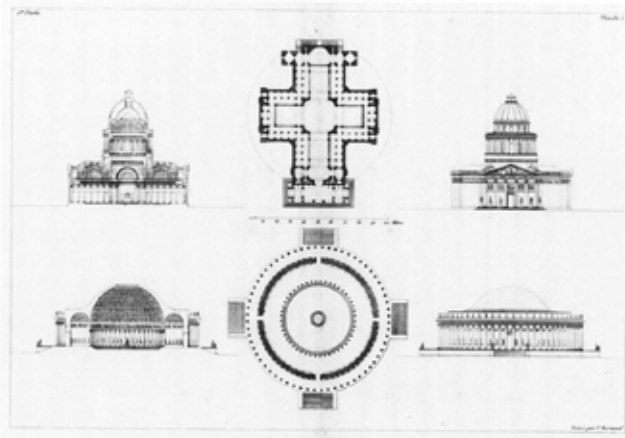

Image 5. Plate in the *Précis* comparing *Ste Geneviéve* and Durand's rotunda.

The intention behind this formal language developed by Durand can be regarded as avoidance from excessive expenses and introduction of new and economical norms in architecture which are gathered under and developed by means of *symétrié* (symmetry), *régularité* (regularity) and *simplicité* (simplicity) (Durand, 2000: 85). Obviously, this trilogy was replaced with the former one (distribution, construction and decoration), since the new, changing and revolutionary nature of architecture was opposed to being reformed on a single archetype (Durand, 2000: 19).

Conclusion

In the end of this paper, a conclusion can be drawn to the primitive hut's influential position between the discussion of the Enlightenment's rationalism and the utilitarianism that came after. Although Durand's attack on Laugier's hut was based on a criticism of metaphysics; both two authors were pioneers of a departure from it and empiricism. As stated by Alan Colquhoun (2009: 166) in his essay entitled 'Rationalism: A Philosophical Concept in Architecture', the

Enlightenment's aim was to discover the universal laws underlying it; whereas Laugier sought for simple and unchanging rules coming from nature rather than following irrational formalization brought by the Baroque. The major role of the primitive hut in Laugier's view therefore, was to reconstruct the meaning in architecture through imitation and to apply the most basic and essential attributions of nature. However to Durand, if imitation of nature was primary concern of architecture, then it should have followed a more effective way to do it. As stated by Pérez-Gómez (1992: 299), Durand's theory of architecture was "an autonomous, self-sufficient and specialized, composed exclusively of truths evident to mathematical reason". This is also meant that, from Durand's theoretical framework primary concern of imitation of nature has been transferred from mimesis and necessity to pragmatism and utility. Within this perspective one can understand that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the primitive hut, as an allegory, was a major shift in terms of finding both cognitive and a physical beginning for architecture. This quest also means that the architectural philosophers and theoreticians of the Enlightenment used the origins of architecture as an agent to purify an everlasting search for beauty. Laugier used this concept in simplifying structure to three essential elements (column, entablature and pediment) and to the three orders (Doric, Ionic and Corinthian) rather than using the Renaissance's vague numeric proportions. Consequently, Laugier's primitive hut can be regarded as an attempt to 'enlighten' the society and architects by using a new legitimated inquiry. Pérez-Gómez (1992: 62) effectively describes what Laugier has postulated as thus: "[…] following his [Laugier's] premise that there was meaning in the world (Nature), Laugier aspired to understand the act of creation, and thus looked back to the origins of architecture. The final answer to his metaphysical question was necessarily a myth" (Perez-Gomez, 1992: 62).

When one considers the historical continuum and development of 19th century France, the age of Enlightenment becomes a very important milestone for the liberation of public from the dogmatic doctrines and traditional knowledge. After the French Revolution in 1789, scientific revolutionists and philosophers of the era developed the

modern thought and science with empiricism, skepticism and satire. Owing to challenging obsolete authority and traditionalism, those figures like Durand got inspired to commit themselves to universalism and rationalism. This also can be interpreted as the redefinition of architectural traditions which were being followed until then and a paradigm shift in architectural theory. As Antonio Hernandez (1969: 153-4) notes, the change in the theoretical concept of architecture was an extended process of secularization and a definition of a new architecture towards society as a matter of public interest. Since Durand's primary concern of architecture was to achieve public and private utility, it was far from being reasonable to use lavish expenses to please users and society via architecture instead, it was the rationalization of architecture by means of scientific methods and norms. His criticism on formal language of the Neoclassicism interpreted the orders in Laugier's primitive model as unnatural objects; therefore they were regarded as unnecessary and useless adornments. Durand's antagonism towards any transcendental justification makes him to look at the primitive hut from a more scientific perspective. This time, the primitive hut is disbanded from its ancient descents and transformed into a constructive model which is developed and supported by his positivist observations. Regardless of the two contradictory views of two important reformist theorists, the primitive hut still symbolizes a major break with the Renaissance tradition and an allegory of architecture capturing its primitive essence by considering social, religious and philosophical values of the society surrounding it.

Endnotes

1.   Laugier doesn't conclude Tuscan and Composite orders since he regards only the Greek architecture as representing the true principles of architecture. As he states in the Essay, these two orders are borrowed and they don't differ from the former three (Laugier, 1755: 65).

2.   In the text the French term is used due to the importance of interpreting the term accurately (Laugier, 1753: 12-13).

3.   In order to understand Durand's criticism on *Ste Geneviéve*, it is very important to mention the shifted meaning of the building. In 1755, Soufflot was commissioned to design a religious building but when the construction was ended

in 1791, the French Revolution had already changed the country's social structure entirely. As a consequence of the nationalism and democracy brought by it, after Soufflot's death, the church was transformed into a mausoleum for French citizens and named as *Panthéon* in 1793 (Mallgrave, 2005: 15-19). Durand published the first volume of the Précis approximately eleven years after *Panthéon* had become a secular public place. Therefore it can be interpreted that all the criticisms of him on the plan scheme and its structural elements are considered for public utility.

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List of Images

Image 1. Two woodcuts from *Vitruvius Teutsch* illustrating Vitruvius's narrative of dwelling. Vitruvius, Marcus Pollio (1548). *Vitruvius Teutsch*, translated by Walter Hermann Ryff. Nürnberg: Johan Petreius, p: 61-62.

Image 2. Two engravings which were appeared as frontispieces in different editions of the *Essai*. Laugier, Marc-Antoine (1753). *Essai sur l'Architecture*, Paris: Duchesne. Laugier, Marc-Antoine (1755). *Essay on Architecture*, London: Gray's Inn.

Image 3. The first draft of the *Ste Geneviéve* from 1756. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Premier_projet_du_Panthéon_Soufflot_(1756).png (26.02.2015).

Image 4. Different illustrations of the primitive hut after Vitruvius's description. Rykwert, Joseph (1981). *On Adam's House in Paradise: The idea of the primitive hut in architectural history*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, p: 39, 57, 64, 73.

Image 5. Plate in the *Précis* comparing *Ste Geneviéve* and Durand's rotunda. Durand, Jean-Nicolas-Louis (2000). *Précis of the Lectures on Architecture,* Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, p: 212.