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Rome vaut bien un prix. An Artistic Elite in the Service of the State: the Pensionnaires of the Académie de France in Rome, 1666-1968

Annie Verger*

Résumé

The *Dictionnaire biographique des pensionnaires de l'Académie de France à Rome* serves as a register for the artists sent to Italy by the French state from the time of Louis XIV in 1666 up until the abolition of the Prix de Rome *concours* in 1968. After this year, the selection of *pensionnaires* nonetheless continued this tradition in another form, and the Académie de France in Rome thus celebrated its 350th anniversary in 2016. This notion of continuity lies at the heart of the present study, which has been carried out over a number of years.

The dictionary was published in May 2011 by L'Échelle de Jacob in Dijon, before being made available online as part of the ARTL@S project (<https://artlas.huma-num.fr>). The individual entries of each *pensionnaire*, featuring their biographical and professional information (place of birth and death, studies, *Envois de Rome* [works which the *pensionnaires* were obliged to send to France each year], métiers, prizes and awards, etc.), can be consulted on the site. By making this information available online, ARTL@S allows specialists from different historical periods to identify and correct any oversights or errors, and to enrich the entries with further information. Links have also been established with different institutions holding primary sources and archives (archives at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts; portraits of *pensionnaires* at the Académie de France in Rome; *Envois de Rome* collected by members of the Institut national d'histoire de l'art) in order to further enrich this indispensable research tool.

This article proposes to present the first results obtained from a prosopographic, social and historical study of the population of *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France in Rome.

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This article proposes to present the first results obtained from a prosopographic, social and historical study of the population of *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France in Rome.

The Prosopographic Dictionary and its Methods

This study initially drew on a research guide entitled 'Prosopographie des élites françaises (XVI^e- XX^e siècles)'¹ that was published in 1979 by the Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine – even though it is important to recognize the problematic use of the term 'élite' in the title of this guide.² A difficulty is immediately raised by the inclusion of *pensionnaires* from the Ancien Régime in this guide, since even for those artists who received the highest ranking in the *concours* in painting or sculpture, a stay at the Académie in Rome remained a privilege that was granted by the king himself. By virtue of the guidelines imposed by the Surintendant des bâtiments royaux, *pensionnaires* were not nobles nor bourgeoisie nor notable artists, but rather consigned to a role of copyists. The history of art has since privileged artists who were sought after following their return from Rome – those who enjoyed exhibitions in major museums, *catalogues raisonnés* and exhaustive monographies dedicated to their work – over those who enjoyed less illustrious careers; this to such an extent that many of the latter have wholly disappeared, whilst many of the former have solidified into an artistic elite.

This project aims not to ratify the existing project of the history of art – the celebration of a minority of famous *pensionnaires* – but rather to analyze a unique and precious object of study, namely the cohort constituted by this clearly defined group of artists who all obtained an entry pass for a state institution as well as broader set of advantages, much like the students of France's other *grandes écoles*. The collective biography of this community has here been written through a transversal study of the individual entries in the dictionary.

¹ François Crouzet, Marc Perrichet, Louis Bergeron, Jean-Pierre Chaline, *Pour une prosopographie des élites françaises (XVI^e-XX^e siècles)*, roundtable discussion, Paris 27th October 1979. Christophe Charle, Jean Naglé, Marc Perrochet, Michel Richard, Denis Woronoff, *Prosopographie des élites françaises (XVI^e-XX^e siècles) – Guide de recherche*. Paris, Centre national de la recherche scientifique. Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine. C.N.R.S. 4^e trimestre 1980. Publications de l'I.H.M.C.

² In the research guide, the authors state that they are approaching a more complex domain, that of intellectual elites, artists in particular, on the grounds that 'by isolating *a priori* the elite of this milieu, we act as if a problem has been solved, namely that of the contemporary or historical selection of those considered as 'great' thinkers, writers or artists in a given era', p. 154.

Identifying the *pensionnaires*

The first step of this study involved the compilation of a complete list of *pensionnaires* using existing documents. The registry of names, interrupted here and there by the retirement or the death of a secretary, was carried out periodically by archivists up until 1940. The Rome-Athens directory subsequently took over this role, listing the cohorts of the Académie de France in Rome alongside those of the École française in Athens, founded in 1846, and the École française in Rome, founded in 1873. The list, which became definitive in 1968 with the end of the *concours*, contains 1264 *pensionnaires* in total: <https://artlas.huma-num.fr/acad/>

Which methods to use for a study of the *pensionnaires*?

The biographical dictionary of proper names, listed in alphabetical order, offers an interesting nomenclature, and it was in this form that the repertory now completed and made available online was first published. Yet the dictionary alone does not allow us to grasp the transformations of the political, economic and artistic fields, nor to comprehend “the historical process which governed the crystallization of this historical reality that is the state, first in its dynastic and then in its bureaucratic form.”³

Conversely, chronology can begin to answer this question since it reveals the evolving relationship between the state and artists. In the context of a search for information on the movement of ideas, stylistic evolution and social change, the dictionary lies at the crossroads of three disciplines: history, the history of art, and sociology.

This is a historical investigation to the extent that the existence of the Académie de France in Rome spans several centuries and was subject to various regime changes which inevitably impacted the field of artistic production. The protocol and the main instruments of the historian have been respected in

this study, with manuscripts, printed material, biographical and familial histories all used as sources. The entry of each *pensionnaire* provides personal data (date and place of birth, date and place of death, father’s socio-professional category, family origins, ancestors, sometimes over several generations, order of birth, marriages, godfathers and mentors, etc.) (Fig. 1). For each entry, these data are complemented by information concerning the head of State at the moment of the artist’s inscription in the academy; the political and administrative tutors; the name of the *secrétaire perpétuel* at the Académie des Beaux-Arts from the 19th century, the name of the director of the Académie de France in Rome at the date that the prize was awarded, and the date of the entry of the *pensionnaire* into the academy. A sound knowledge of historical developments (sometimes on a day-to-day timescale, particularly with regards to the destinies of artists during the revolution) is of course necessary for a long-term understanding of the stakes and struggles inscribed in the data.

The second and equally indispensable discipline for this study is the history of art, which allows for an entry into the specialized universes of the various disciplines (painting, sculpture, engraving, architecture, musical composition) present at the academy, as well as an understanding of these areas in the shifting contexts of the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and of the expertise of the authorities in each discipline over time. The entries of the dictionary include a range of artistic information such as the discipline of the *pensionnaire*, their studies and training, their masters, their *envois*, their careers and their most significant works.

Lastly, the discipline of sociology provides the tools for enquiry and the methods of analysis with which to identify the relevant attributes of the laureates. As Pierre Bourdieu explains:

Understanding a symbolic order [...] means understanding the concordance between the objective structures of the social world and our cognitive structures. In other words, this means

³ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘From the King’s House to the Reason of State: A Model of the Genesis of the Bureaucratic Field’, *Constellations*, vol. 11, n°1, March 2004, 16.

FAMILY NAME First name
Date of birth Place of birth Date of death Place of death
Gender
Father
Mother
Discipline Place of study Master Date of Prix de Rome Subject of Prix <i>Brevet</i>
Date of arrival in Rome Stay in Rome <i>Envois</i> Date of departure from Rome
Career Salons, exhibitions Representative works Teaching Awards
Bibliography Notes
Century Governmental régime Regulatory authorities Secretary of Académie des Beaux-arts Director of Académie de France à Rome Address of the Académie

Figure 1. List of items composing the standard form for The *Pensionnaires de l'Académie de France à Rome*.

adopting the perspective of an ethnologist who does not consider that world from the outside and does not adopt a normative outlook, a perspective which seeks neither to condemn nor to rehabilitate.⁴

This position seems particularly relevant in the case of the artists awarded the Prix de Rome: decorated with all manner of honours under the Second Empire, they were faced with a symbolic bankruptcy in the 20th century as they were outflanked by the avant-garde. The very act of paying attention to the winners of the Prix de Rome could be perceived as an attempt to rehabilitate them; yet this dictionary has no intention other than to treat this group in the same fashion as pupils of other elite schools, all of whom benefitted from a statutory title.

From the *Maison du Roi* to the Dynastic State

The Sources of the Académie de France in Rome: the Shadow of Rome

Unlike the *Maîtrise*, which had, since the Middle Ages, exercised control over craft métiers – a legally-enshrined control underwritten by patent letters from the king – and unlike the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, founded in 1648 in order to emancipate corporations and to form “an internal elite within the métier”⁵, the Académie de France in Rome was, from its very origins, a direct extension of monarchical power. Devised in 1666 by the king and by Colbert, the Secrétaire d’État de la Maison du Roi, the academy reflected profound and far-reaching aspirations. The choice to reference antiquity through the academy’s location, as Claude Nicolet has suggested, is

significant in that it recalls “the age-old question of the ‘origins of the French monarchy’ (that is to say the Frankish monarchy), with the implication of a continuity with the Roman Empire; and at the same time [the reference to antiquity] evokes the origins of the legitimacy of the nobility.”⁶ Though his father Louis XIII had chosen him as an heir prior to his death, Louis XIV was just five years old when he came to the throne, and was threatened with removal by the upper echelons of France’s nobility. This class sought to take advantage of the young king’s vulnerability and to usurp his Regent, Anne of Austria, and her counsellor, Mazarin. Reaffirming the notion of a continuity between the Roman Empire and the monarchy was a means of reasserting the legitimacy of the young monarch at a moment when he was beginning to directly exercise his power.

This genealogical motivation was joined by another ambition announced by Louis XIV: “*faire de Versailles une seconde Rome*”.⁷ As the project for the academy came into being, the king already had in mind an iconographic programme for a vast, undeveloped plain abutting the as-yet unfinished palace at Versailles. Between 1660 and 1710, sculptures were added to the space along a central axis lined by fourteen sectors featuring parterres, woods, paths, fountains, crescents and circles.⁸ After moving his court to Versailles in 1682, classical antiquity became a key reference for Louis XIV, with Roman Emperors a favourite touchstone. The preference for a classicism that pointed clearly towards the ancient world was undoubtedly an attempt to outdo Bernini’s baroque efforts in Rome.⁹

Colbert, too, was personally invested in the Académie de France in Rome. As the Contrôleur général des Finances from 1665 to 1673, he sought

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Peter Collier, Margaret Rigaud-Drayton, *Manet: A Symbolic Revolution*, Hoboken, NJ, John Wiley & Sons, 2018, p. 3.

⁵ Nathalie Heinich, *Du peintre à l’artiste. Artisans et académiciens à l’âge classique*, Paris, Les éditions de Minuit, 1993.

⁶ Claude Nicolet, “Rome et les conceptions de l’État en France et en Allemagne au XIX^e siècle”, in *Visions sur le développement des états européens, Théories et historiographies de l’État moderne*, papers of conference organised by the Fondation européenne de la science et de l’École française de Rome (18th-31st March 1990). Collection de l’École française de Rome – n°171, p. 23. In note 16, which accompanies this quote, Claude Nicolet reminds us that “this debate, which is coextensive with discussion around whether there was a true conquest at the moment of the barbarian invasions or rather a continuity with Roman power, was a source of fascination for French historians in the 17th and 18th centuries”. Our translation.

⁷ François Souchal, ‘La ‘NOUVELLE ROME’ Réflexions sur la sculpture française sous le règne de Louis XIV’, *Gazette des Beaux-arts*, vol. 88, n° 1294, November 1976, p. 161-164. “New Rome, yes, if we wish, and since the Creators of Versailles themselves believed it so, imagining that imperial antiquity also deployed such figures and proudly aligned them along forums and stadiums, even if the relationship is a little distant. The new Rome outdoes the ancient Rome, and modern Rome, too, which in its own way sought to recover its ancient grandeur.”, p.164, our translation.

⁸ *Manière de montrer les jardins de Versailles par Louis XIV*, Paris, Éd. de la Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1992. Diffusion Le Seuil.

⁹ In 1664, Colbert had invited Bernini to Paris to restore the Louvre. Claude Perrault eventually won the commission with a far more classical colonnade. Bernini returned to Rome, leaving behind only a statue of Louis XIV that the monarch disliked.

to bypass corporations in order to accelerate innovation and competition within French industry.¹⁰ At the heart of his program lay a strict control of economic transactions with foreign entities. Colbert only allowed the most specialized artisans to come to France – Venetian glassmakers and mirror-makers, for example – whilst at the same time encouraging French artists to travel to Rome to hone their skills amongst the masters of antiquity and the Renaissance. Following his appointment as Surintendant des bâtiments et manufactures in 1664, Colbert oversaw the creation of the Académie de France in Rome. His participation was all the more precious for the fact that he boasted an enviable knowledge of Rome and its art: he had managed the fortune of Mazarin for around ten years prior to his service to the king, and during this time had overseen the acquisition of many artworks for his employer's collection. As a *grand commis*, he could also recommend young artists to institutions and private collectors, who would task them with copying “*ce qu'il y a de beau dans Rome.*”

The founding text of the Académie de France in Rome took the form of a letter addressed to Nicolas Poussin, who was a natural choice to head this new institution – until his death on 19th November 1665. In the letter, Colbert underscores the importance of the new academy in the eyes of this king:

With regards to the painting and the sculpture for which his Majesty has a most singular affection, and which he holds as the two arts which above all others ought to labour for his glory and transmit his name to posterity, no effort is to be spared in their perfection. It was with so noble and praiseworthy an intention that his Majesty founded in Paris some years ago an Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, waged teachers to instruct the youth, proposed prizes to students, and afforded to this assembly all the privileges for which it could wish. This institution has not been fruitless; it trains youths who promise a great deal and who shall someday make excellent masters. Yet because it seems necessary for young people in your

profession to undertake a stay in Rome, to form their tastes and manners before the originals and the models of the great masters of antiquity and centuries past, and because those that dispose of the greatest genius are unwilling or unable to undertake this voyage due to its expense, his Majesty has resolved to send each year a certain number chosen from the Académie to Rome and to provide for their needs during their stay there. His Majesty considers moreover that it would be of great advantage to the progress of these young people to be under the direction of some excellent master who would guide them in their study, who would transmit to them the good taste and the manners of the ancients, and who would make them remark in the works that they will copy the secret and almost inimitable beauties that escape the notice of most who regard them and are only perceived by the most skilled.¹¹

The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture opened its first *concours* on 10th September 1664. The *concours* was adjudicated on 8th May 1665, and the prizes awarded on 9th January 1666. The first subjects concerned the glory of Louis XIV: ‘*La renommée montrant le portrait du Roi aux quatre parties du monde*’, ‘*Rachat fait par le Roi sur les côtes d’Afrique, des esclaves de toutes les nations*’, ‘*Conquête de la Franche-Comté*’, ‘*Divertissement du Roi sur la place de Dunkerque*’, ‘*Passage du Rhin*’. From 1674, Biblical subjects were proposed, beginning with ‘*Création de l’homme*’ and ‘*La Transgression d’Adam*’.¹²

The statutes of the Académie de France in Rome were presented to the assembly of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture on 11th February 1666. Its first director appointed by the king was Charles Errard, whose father had been one of Louis XIII’s court painters. Errard had twice travelled to Rome in the first half of the 17th century, and was a founding member of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture.

¹⁰ Philippe Minard, *La fortune du colbertisme. État et industrie dans la France des Lumières*, Paris, Fayard, 1998.

¹¹ Henri Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France à Rome*, Paris, Éd. Plon-Nourri, 1924, vol. I, p. 2.

¹² Victor Baltard, ‘État général et chronologique des grands prix de peinture, sculpture, architecture, musique et gravure’ in, *Villa Médicis à Rome dessinée, mesurée, publiée et accompagnée d’un texte historique et explicatif par Victor Baltard, architecte, ex-pensionnaire de l’Académie de France Paris*, s.n. 1874.

An Elite in Training

Studying biographies in chronological order allows us to better reveal the relationship between the social positions of individuals and the order imposed by the State, first in its dynastic form and later in its bureaucratic form. Amongst the factors contributing to an artist's success in the *concours* and their subsequent attainment of the *brevet royal* (the only valid passport for Rome), the profession of the artist's father seems to be an effective indicator. The split between those exercising mechanical arts, described by Charles Loyseau as "*ce qui est vil et abject*", and merchants, "*les derniers du peuple qui portent qualité d'honneur*" still represented an impenetrable boundary in the 17th century. In her work *Du peintre à l'artiste. Artisans et académiciens à l'âge classique*, Nathalie Heinich has ably shown how painters and sculptors borrowed "values from courtesans and *gens de lettres* in order to better ingratiate themselves with these superior peers and to better differentiate themselves from their inferior colleagues."¹³ The foundation of the Académie de France in Rome contributed to this process of emancipation and ennoblement of the artistic profession.

The first 20 *pensionnaires* dispatched to Rome under Charles Errard's directorship, between 1666 to 1672, were chosen for their ability to match the king's ambitions. 11 were aged from 17 to 26 and 2 were older than 30.¹⁴ They were Parisians for the most part, with 13 having been born in the capital; 7 others were from the provinces, in particular from Blois or garrison towns. The majority were the sons of artists: amongst the first cohort's fathers were 8 academy members (including 3 founding members of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture) and 6 painters, sculptors and engravers. Although the latter were not academy members, they did have personal relationships with court

artists: this was the case of Simon Vouet, the father of Louis-René; of Le Brun, a witness at De Bonnemer's marriage; of the two Mosniers, who originated from Blois where the French court had sat for a spell in the 16th century. Amongst the fathers of the first *pensionnaires* were two who had worked for Marie de' Medici,¹⁵ while others had been in the service of the king as goldsmiths, watchsmiths and officers. Only four fathers of the first cohort of *pensionnaires* came from lower social orders: a wine merchant, a trader, a master stonemason, and a Parisian *bourgeois*.

In order to extend our study to encompass the social positions of the fathers of the 1264 *pensionnaires*, two sources have been used: parish registers, in particular baptismal acts which record the trade of the declaring party (i.e. the father), and the birth certificates required for school enrolment (in particular the birth certificates presented by artists for their enrolment in the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts). Throughout the different eras covered by our study, the priest and the town hall registrar recorded the father's trade as it was custom to do so.

It was Colbert who introduced census-taking in 1670 (for the *état-civil* of Paris), followed by Vauban in 1682 (in Douai). Censuses would use two markers: the soul¹⁶ and the hearth. The Church would record baptisms, marriages and burials, while the civil administration would index each homestead (father, mother, children and any domestic staff). Demographic surveys aimed not only to count the population but also to estimate household assets. In this context, the ranking established in 1695 by the process of capitation,¹⁷ a "tax on social standing" according to François Bluche, offers an additional tool for situating fathers' positions within society.

¹³ Nathalie Heinich, *op. cit.*, p.16.

¹⁴ Jean Raon is an exception. Aged 36 upon his arrival in Rome, he was married and had two children. His selection was undoubtedly helped by the fact that he was the son and grandson of Parisian stonemasons. He attained the title of sculptor but had also inherited a good deal of technical knowledge from his ancestors. His son, Jean-Melchior, would go on to be a sculptor and *pensionnaire* in 1712, his career closely aligning with his father's.

¹⁵ The town of Blois was a royal residence. Louis XII was born there. Marie de' Medici was exiled there by her son Louis XIII in 1610, and it was there that she became acquainted with Jean, the father of the Mosniers; she commissioned him to copy the *Virgin of the Green Cushion* by Andrea Solario and awarded him a bursary to study in

Italy. The queen thus anticipated the notion of sending young painters to train in Rome. Cf. Louis Bossebœuf, *Une famille de peintres blésois : les Monsnier*, Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1906, p. 236-247.

¹⁶ After the Council of Trent (1545-1563), after which the dogma of original sin was effaced by baptism, the *Status Animarum*, otherwise known as the "book of the state of souls" was kept by clergymen who used it to register the acts signed in their parishes.

¹⁷ Marcel Marion, *Les impôts directs sous l'Ancien Régime, principalement au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Cornély, 1910. François Bluche & Jean-François Solnon, *La véritable hiérarchie sociale dans l'ancienne France. Le tarif de la première capitation*, Geneva, Droz, 1983.

Given the object of this present study, a good knowledge of the history of statistics is indispensable. At a conference in Vaucresson in 1977 organized by Alain Desrosières and Jacques Mairesse,¹⁸ an interpretation of social hierarchies prior to the 20th century allowed for a comparison of trades of laureates' fathers before and after the Revolution. In the conclusion of his article '*Éléments pour l'histoire des nomenclatures socio-professionnelles*', Alain Desrosières cites a specialist in economic and social history:

Historian Ernest Labrousse remarked that social hierarchies have always been built upon three factors: wealth, birth, and office, with only slight variations nuancing here and there the interplay of these three factors. The Ancien Régime leant more weight to birth, the bourgeoisie of the 19th century to wealth. The institutions of the second half of the 20th century seem to confer a decisive role to office, apparently dependent on individual skill alone but in reality always anchored (albeit in different ways than at the time of competitive capitalism or nobility) in birth and wealth as factors of the reproduction of social class.¹⁹

One work in particular proved to be exceptionally useful tool for our study paternal professions over so long a period: *Projets de codes socio-professionnels pour les XVIII^e et XIX^e* drawn up by historian Adeline Daumard, who proposes nine rankings for each of the centuries in question, whilst accounting for transformations linked to the break caused by the revolution; for our discussion of the Ancien Régime, we have borrowed our categorical divisions from her study.

27% of paternal professions have not been identified. This figure includes *pensionnaires* who have disappeared for various reasons: death upon return to France, move abroad, lack of support, etc. The analysis of professions has thus allowed for the identification of some 73% of paternal professions.

The following graphic shows that lower categories are significantly underrepresented amongst the

laureates of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. In much the same way, the rural world is almost wholly absent, as are day labourers, workers, domestic staff and employees of various kinds.

The categories that are overrepresented here are the liberal arts professions, a category which includes painters, sculptors, engravers and architects, as well as the category of employers, which encompasses the masters of corporations including stonecutters, marble workers, carpentry entrepreneurs and carpenters, wood sculptors, cabinetmakers, masons, smelters, enamellers, glazers, and intaglio printmakers – all the trades that led from skilled labour to Royal service. This latter category also included goldsmiths, architects of the King's buildings, a director of hallmarks and monies, a bookseller, a surgeon, etc.

Progressively, a 'trade aristocracy' emerged, based on the lineage which, *mutatis mutandis*, borrowed its modes of reproduction from the nobility. This artistic aristocracy nonetheless remains in the "positively privileged property classes" described by Max Weber as "professionals with sought-after expertise or privileged education (such as lawyers, physicians, artists)."²⁰

An Elite in Search of Honour

Upon their return to France, some *pensionnaires* came to occupy important positions. Under Louis XIV, they immediately found work on the construction projects at Versailles, Marly and the Invalides. Between 1666 and 1792, they benefited from honorary distinctions such as living quarters at the Louvre, accommodation that was often passed down from father to son.

¹⁸ Alain Desrosières, statistician and sociologist, is a specialist in the history of statistics. Jacques Mairesse is an economist. Ten years after the Vaucresson conference, they published 'Pour une histoire de la statistique', vol. I. Collective work INSEE/Economica, 1987. Published by Joëlle Affichard.

¹⁹ Ernest Labrousse (1895-1988). Historian, specialist in economic and social history. Trained a generation of historians including Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Maurice Agulhon, Adeline Daumard, and many others.

²⁰ Max Weber, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff et. al., *Economy and Society*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, Chapter IV: 'Status Groups and Classes', p. 303.

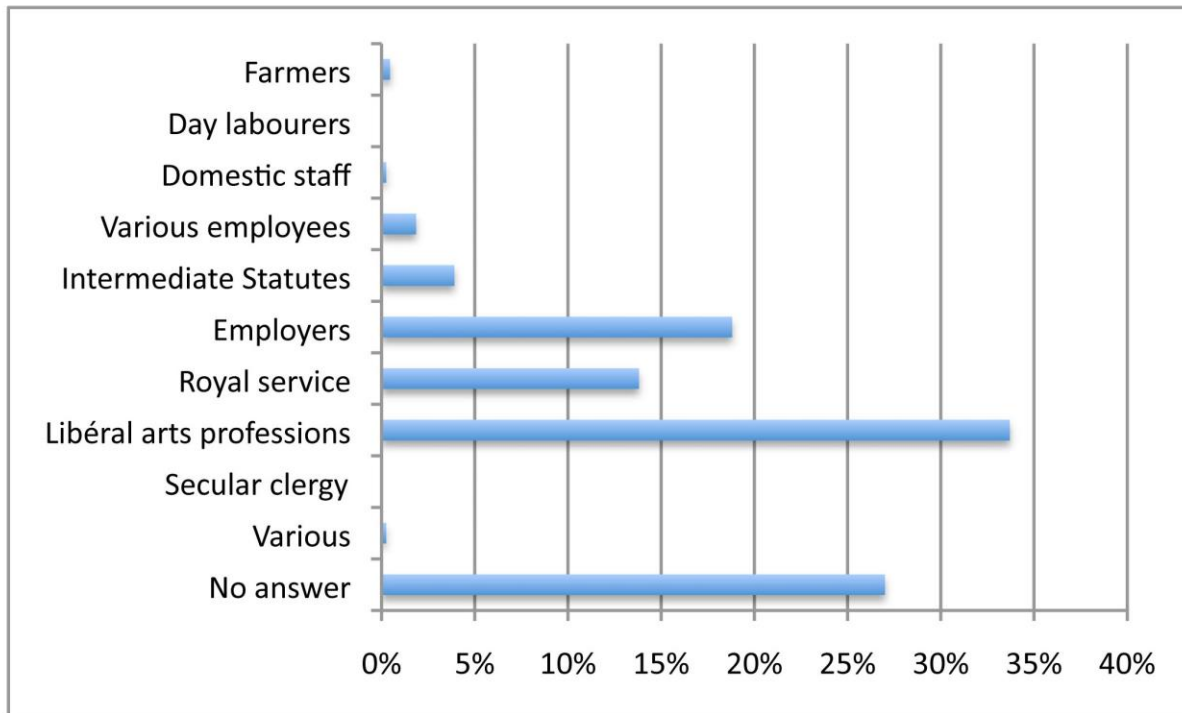


Figure 2: Breakdown of paternal professions of *pensionnaires* under the Ancient régime from 1666 to 1792. Detail of percentages below.

0 (Farmers) and manual trades linked to the cultivation of land.	0,45%
1 (Day labourers et ouvriers de villes) compagnons, apprentis etc.	0%
2 (Domestic staff) and household employees.	0,25%
3 (Various employees) shopworkers, shopboys.	1,85%
4 (Intermediate statutes between salaried worker and master) skilled labourers.	3,90%
5 (Employers) manufacturers, merchants, traders, entrepreneurs.	18,80%
6 (Royal service) civil and military sectors.	13,80%
7 Liberal arts professions.	33,70%
8 (Secular clergy).	0%
9 (Various).	0,25%
10 No answer.	27%
	<hr/>
	100%

38.5% of *pensionnaires* went on to become academy members.²¹ Some received the noble title of ‘Chevalier de l’ordre de Saint-Michel’, while an even more select few became ‘Premier Peintre du Roi’ or director of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture.

The end of the reign of Louis XIV was a time of crisis for the Académie de France in Rome. A lack of financial means following France’s participation in a series of wars, the *pensionnaires*’ technical weakness, and fights between the Académie’s members and the Papal guards all contributed to director François Poërsen’s unsuccessful calls for its closure in 1707. This uncertainty was to last until the end of the Regency. The period often considered as the institution’s golden age coincided with the ascension of Louis XV to the throne and the action of the Directeur général des Bâtiments, the Duc d’Antin, who remedied the Académie’s financial woes and transferred it to the Palais Mancini in 1725. The palace’s location on the Corso, well placed for Rome’s various festivals and Papal processions, and for the reception of princes, ambassadors and cardinals, made it a *de facto* second French embassy. The director periodically drew up reports on the actions of the *pensionnaires*, who were to be “disciplined like soldiers and wise as monks” according to royal orders; he also recorded the academy’s delicate dealings with Romans and the Vatican.²²

The second half of the 18th century was enriched by the ‘rediscovery’ of Rome.²³ The *pensionnaires* had long been confined to classrooms where they drew studies using collections of mouldings; now, they were encouraged by the academy’s new director Nicolas Vleughels to venture outside and make studies in the open air using techniques better adapted to this approach: watercolours, sanguine, chalk on paper, etc. They discovered the true scale of monuments and the interplay of light and shadow. At the same time, they encountered figures

who had to come to Rome learn about the latest archeological discoveries in the city. Jean-Louis Desprez, the winner of the Premier Prix in 1776, sketched the traces of Ancient Greece in Naples, Calabria and Sicily for the abbé de Saint-Non. Following the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the *pensionnaires* began to travel. Their territory expanded further still when the Duc de Choiseul, who was named ambassador to Rome in 1753 before becoming the ambassador to Constantinople, invited *pensionnaires* to follow him. Louis-François Cassas, who entered the Académie as an external candidate in 1780, was just one example; he crossed Greece with the Duc de Choiseul, before embarking upon a two-year odyssey across Asia Minor (Smyrna, Ephesus) Syria (Aleppo, Palmyra, Baalbeck), Palestine and Egypt (Cairo). He returned with some 250 drawings.

The prestige gleaned by the *pensionnaires* through these encounters with the Roman milieu of admirers of ancient civilizations and with foreign ambassadors quickly earned them the favour of European courts. Several *pensionnaires* thus became directors of painting academies: Charles-François Hutin in Dresden in 1764, for example, or Louis-Joseph Le Lorrain, who became the Premier Peintre and director of the academy in Saint Petersburg, as did Jacques-François Saly in Copenhagen. Others still became the Premiers Sculpteurs of the King of Prussia or of Sweden, or Premier Peintre of Catherine II of Russia. Their reputation extended even beyond Europe, with Charles-Louis Clérisseau drawing up a project for Thomas Jefferson, then the ambassador of the United States to France, for the Capitol of Richmond, Virginia which was completed between 1785 and 1788. Jean-Antoine Houdon was in turn summoned by Jefferson in 1785 for a statue of George Washington.

²¹ In her work on artists of the classical period, Nathalie Heinich puts at 8% the proportion of academy members amongst the 2105 French painters of the 17th century. *Op. cit.*, p. 241.

²² *Correspondance des Directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome avec les Surintendants des bâtiments, 1666-1804*, in 18 volumes published from manuscripts

at the Archives nationales under the direction of the Beaux-arts. Scientific editors, Anatole de Montaiglon and Jules Giffrey, Paris, Éditions Charavay, 1887-1912.

²³ *La fascination de l’Antique. 1700-1770. Rome découverte, Rome inventée*. Exhibition catalogue, Musée de la civilisation gallo-romaine, Lyon, Somogy éditions d’art, 1999. Jean-François Méjanès ‘Les pensionnaires de l’Académie de France à Rome et l’Antiquité’, p. 95-105.

The Emergence of a Pre-revolutionary Critique

As their horizons expanded beyond the Académie, the increasingly emancipated *pensionnaires* became ever more critical of the institution. The Académie demanded that they be docile, chaste, full of probity and Christian virtue. Yet from the very foundation of the Académie, *pensionnaires* resisted and transgressed these rules. Some sculptors refused to copy the works selected by Colbert and were expelled. Others accepted private commissions, or engaged in a range of inappropriate behaviours.²⁴

These problems worsened in the latter half of the 18th century. The annual confession demanded by the Vatican was contested by the *pensionnaires*;²⁵ Clérisseau, first amongst the dissenters, was forced to recant his decision. Adrien Mouton, who was awarded the Prix de l'Académie d'architecture in 1764, categorically refused to consent to this practice, and was excluded "*comme réfractaire invincible à la loi pascalle*" on 19th August 1767. Upon his return to Paris, he published a libel entitled *Mémoire à consulter sur une contrainte à communier* and brought a case for damages, interest and the restoration of his honour against director Charles Natoire. The litigation lasted for some fourteen years, but Mouton eventually won his case.²⁶

As time went on, artists took ever greater liberties with the institution and its rules. Some sought to enter the Académie without having been awarded prizes, and opened their own studios whilst attending the institution as external students. One such case was that of Louis-Augustin Belle, who came to an arrangement with the Comte de Cagliostro and transformed his home into a masonic lodge. Other *pensionnaires* followed his example. Such initiatives prefigured the French

revolution and posed a direct challenge to the Vatican and the Roman court. The Palais Mancini fell foul of its Italian hosts and was ransacked and burned on 13th January 1793. That same year, the French delegate Hugou de Basseville was killed and the *pensionnaires* forced to flee to Naples and Florence.²⁷ The distance between the sovereign authority in Paris and the Roman academy meant that the *pensionnaires* who were in theory subject to the institution's rules could flout them with relative ease.

From the Dynastic State to the Bureaucratic State

On 8th August 1793, all of the royal academies were abolished upon David's orders. However, two years later, a report to the Comité d'instruction publique presented to the executive commission on 26 vendémiaire an 4 (18th October 1795) by Pierre-Louis Ginguené called for the re-establishment of the Roman academy: the new regime quickly came to understand the important role such an institution could play in the cultural, artistic and geopolitical influence of revolutionary France.

In 1795, the acts of the executive commission of the Instruction publique thus carried the following statement:

The commission of eleven²⁸ understood the fate afforded to the arts by the abolition of the École de Rome, known as the Académie de France, and has proposed to re-establish it. Indeed what distinguishes France and assures its superiority in the arts is the fact that it has a school. Spain, England, Germany have all had artists endowed with great genius in this century. Yet as these nations have not established a school, these few men have left to their

²⁴ The Directeur général des Bâtiments du roi, the Marquis de Villacerf, wrote in 1691 to directeur La Teulière: "You can tell Sarrabat that the King will not allow him to take leave until such a time as he has finished the painting that he began at the petit Chigi. If he leaves the Academy without permission, his Majesty will have him arrested, no matter where he is, and you are not to give him a penny until you hear from me." Henri Lapauze, 'Histoire de l'Académie de France à Rome', vol. 1, (1666-1801), *op. cit.*, p. 96. Our translation.

²⁵ Here again we see the principal adopted by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) which decreed that parishes should keep the *stati delle anime* on an annual basis. The priest would visit before Easter to hear the confessions of the *pensionnaires* and register this obligatory act.

²⁶ Henri Lapauze, *op. cit.* Chapter X, Directorat de Natoire (1751-1775), p. 300-308.

²⁷ Lapauze, Henri, *op. cit.* Chapitre XV. L'intermédiaire révolutionnaire – Suvée, directeur à Paris. Cacaull, directeur à Rome (1792-1801), p. 418-443.

²⁸ "The National Convention, having heard the commission instituted by the decree of 10 germinal for the writing and presentation of a project of decree as to the preparation of the organic laws of the constitution and on the means of their gradual and successive application, decrees the following: article 1. A commission of eleven members will be formed that will be charged with the preparation of the necessary laws for the application of the constitution." This Commission of eleven is placed under the authority of Claude Daunou, elected to the Convention as a deputy in 1792. It was made up of Berlier, Boissy d'Anglas, Cambacérès, Creuzé-Latouche, Daunou, Revellière-Lépeaux, Lesage, Louvet, Merlin, Sieyès and Thibeaudeau. The Constitution of 5 fructidor an III was adopted by the Convention on 22nd August 1795. *Archives de l'Assemblée nationale*, 29 germinal, l'an III, Procès verbal de la Convention nationale, vol. 59, p. 274. Our translation.

nations nothing but the glory of having produced them. They have passed on without lending a direction to national genius. They are but stars that have shone in the night... The French Republic must work to provide once more sustenance and power to the genius of its artists... When our students will have been penetrated by the great masters, the Musée national de la République will contain enough objects of emulation for artists to develop their own principles and their own emulation. The re-establishment of the École de France in Italy is thus the greatest service that the Government can render to the arts.²⁹

The new regime would continuously work to ensure that the most favourable possible conditions were in place for a rebirth of “national geniuses”.

The Efforts and Struggles to Organize Artistic Instruction in the Best Possible Conditions

The Académie de France in Rome soon shed its royal livery and replaced it with the emblems of the new Republic. It left the Palais Mancini for the Villa Médicis, and replaced the Prix de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture with the Prix de Rome. This new stage in the academy's life began on 23rd June 1795 with the opening speech for Constitution of the French Republic, which contained provision for a national institute “capable of offering, in its various parts, all branches of public education, and in its whole, the highest degree of human science.”³⁰

Three entities concerned with the training of young artists came into being within the space of a dozen years.³¹ The first was modelled on the past. Antoine Renou, permanent secretary of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture since 1776, had lain low during the revolution. He was able to maintain his control over the school, as well as over

its budget and its models – in short, all of the key assets of the old institution. He injected Republican colour into his dealings with the State, without renegeing on his old habits. Twenty-nine professors from the Académie became members of the Institut.³²

The second entity was very much of the present: the political figures charged with the organization of public education in 1795³³ sought to create *écoles spéciales* for the study of disciplines including astronomy, geometry and mechanics, medicine, antiquities, painting, sculpture, architecture and music. Two pre-existing prizes were recycled for this project: the Prix d'expression and the Prix de la demi-figure (or Prix du torse). In 1797, the *concours* for the Prix de Rome began once more. However, the new academy of painting, sculpture and architecture had yet to acquire a legal status. In 1801, it was still far from a priority for Jean-Antoine Chaptal, the Minister of the Interior under Napoléon Bonaparte. The regime's efforts focused rather on laws concerning the division of the Republic's territory and administration reform.

It was the Institut, the third entity, that would come to dominate the field of artistic training (and in particular its fourth class, the future Académie des Beaux-Arts)³⁴ – despite the protests of the teachers of the École des Beaux-Arts. The artists who made up the painting, sculpture and architecture sections (six in each) would from now on be charged with establishing programmes according to a logic of ongoing *concours*, with judging the candidates and with awarding the Prix de Rome. From 1803, the permanent secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts held sway over the general organization of teaching. The length of the tenures of certain secretaries hampered change in the academic system. Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy took

²⁹ *Archives nationales*, F17, folder 5. Commission exécutive de l'Instruction publique, Paris, le 26 Vendémiaire, an IV.

³⁰ Création de l'Institut de France dans le cadre de la Constitution du 5 fructidor an III (22 août 1795). Conac Gérard, Machelon Jean-Pierre, *La Constitution de l'an III. Boissy d'Anglas et la naissance du libéralisme constitutionnel*, Paris, PUF, collection 'Politique d'aujourd'hui', p. 132.

³¹ For further information on the revolutionary period, see Laurent Jeanne, *A propos de l'École des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1987, in particular the chapters 'Luttes entre David, Renou et Quatremère de Quincy', 'La survivance de l'enseignement académique de 1793 à 1802' and 'Du consulat au Second Empire', p. 44-101.

³² 21 artists progressed from the academy to become members of the Institut (Jacques-Louis David, Joseph-Marie Vien, François-Guillaume Ménageot, Charles-Horace Vernet, Jean-François Chalgrin, François-André Vincent, Bernard Poyet, Charles de Wailly, etc.). This explains a certain continuity that is observable in terms of practices and aesthetic choices, in particular with regards to the taste for imitation, classical references and the superiority of drawing.

³³ Pierre Daunou (1761-1840) drew up a report 'on the means through which to give greater intensity to government'. He participated in the writing of the loi du 3 brumaire an IV on public instruction, known as the loi Daunou. Cf. Gérard Conac & Jean-Pierre Machelon, *op.cit.*, p. 254.

³⁴ Consular decree of 3 pluviôse an XI (23rd January 1803) concerning the new organization of the Institut and the creation of a Beaux-Arts section.

up the post in 1816, aged 61, and held it until 1839, when he was aged 84. Henri Delaborde was secretary from 1874 (aged 63) until 1898 (aged 87, just one year before his death). These generations of secretaries believed that *pensionnaires* should be no more than “national suppliers of classical beauty.”³⁵

A purely reproductive model closely organized around the institution’s means thus emerged. The individual entries of the dictionary reveal the processes through which the academic system took form: the laureates of the Prix de Rome would go on to become teachers at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Several years later, they would be inducted into the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and even could even take on its presidency. As heads of atelier, they would train students who would in turn go on to obtain the Prix de Rome.³⁶ It was within this closed circuit that the pedagogical directives, programmes, subjects, corrections, nominations were decided and the evaluation of the *Envois de Rome* carried out. Artistic filiation now passed more or less directly from master to student, and even from father to son, with successive generations not infrequently awarded the Prix de Rome. This system produced teachers endowed with constant, stable social and scholarly characteristics, allowed for a tight control to be exercised over access to artistic ranks, and facilitated emergence of a monopoly over the Prix de Rome that was self-perpetuating and a reliable source for an art of the State. In this way, from the Revolution through to the founding of the Ministry of Culture in 1959, the department of the arts morphed into a bureaucratic system.

Careers Over Art: the Field of Possible Trajectories

The dictionary allows us to compare the socio-professional categories of the fathers of the laureates. The statistics dating from the Ancien Régime show that the best represented trades were

those in the groups of ‘employers’, ‘royal service’ and ‘liberal arts’ (66%). In the 19th century, farmers became more numerous, but the same categories remained dominant with ‘employers’, ‘civil service’ and ‘liberal arts’ accounting for 41% of fathers’ trades. Rentiers also entered the rankings in the 1800s.

Place of birth emerges as an important indicator in these data. For the Ancien Régime, the 19th and the 20th centuries alike, most *pensionnaires* were born in Paris and the surrounding areas, followed by cities which had hosted an academy under the Ancien Régime³⁷: Toulouse had 25 laureates between 1829 and 1951 (composers and sculptors for the most part); Bordeaux had 19 between 1799 and 1956 (including the Prix de Rome for painting); Lyon had 17 between 1799 and 1950 (including engraving prizes); Marseille had 14 between 1836 and 1967 and Valenciennes boasted 11 between 1801 and 1930. The excellent results of these second cities were often related to the nomination of a former *pensionnaire* of the Villa Médicis as director of a provincial École des Beaux-Arts (for example, François Roganeau in Bordeaux, who was a teacher and then the school’s director between 1929 and 1958). Where data as to artists’ training prior to their entry into the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts are available, a range of potentially advantageous attributes emerge: local apprenticeships; a bursary from the town or the Conseil Général; mastery or regional conservatoire; parents who could train them (musicians in particular).

The possible trajectories of artists can be better understood through two interesting examples. Sculptor Henri Chapu was born in Le Mée (Seine-et-Marne) in 1883 to a peasant father employed by a wealthy family, who later went on to become the concierge of the marquis de Vogüé. Chapu entered the free drawing school with a view to becoming an upholsterer. Aged sixteen, he was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris.

³⁵ Henri Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France à Rome*, op. cit., vol. I, p. XVIII.

³⁶ The atelier François Picot (Prix de Rome de peinture in 1813) produced fifteen laureates, for example.

³⁷ Nathalie Heinich, op.cit. Cf. l’annexe 15, p.257, « Les académies de province (1676-1789).

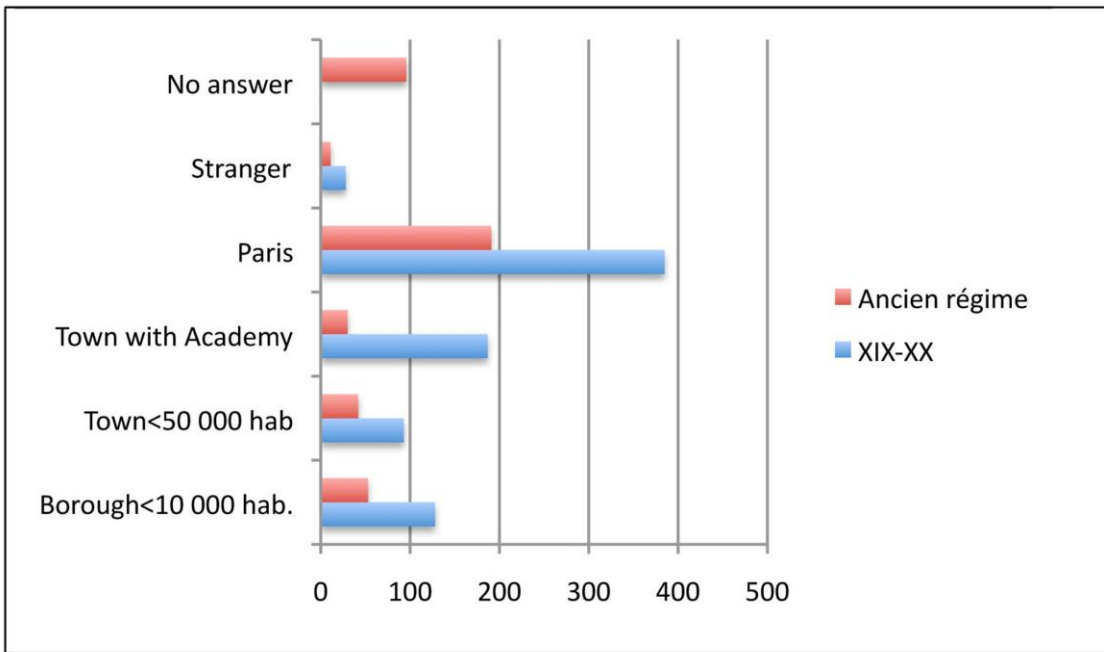


Figure 3: places of birth of *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France in Rome (Comparison between Ancien Régime N = 436 and 19th and 20th centuries N= 821)

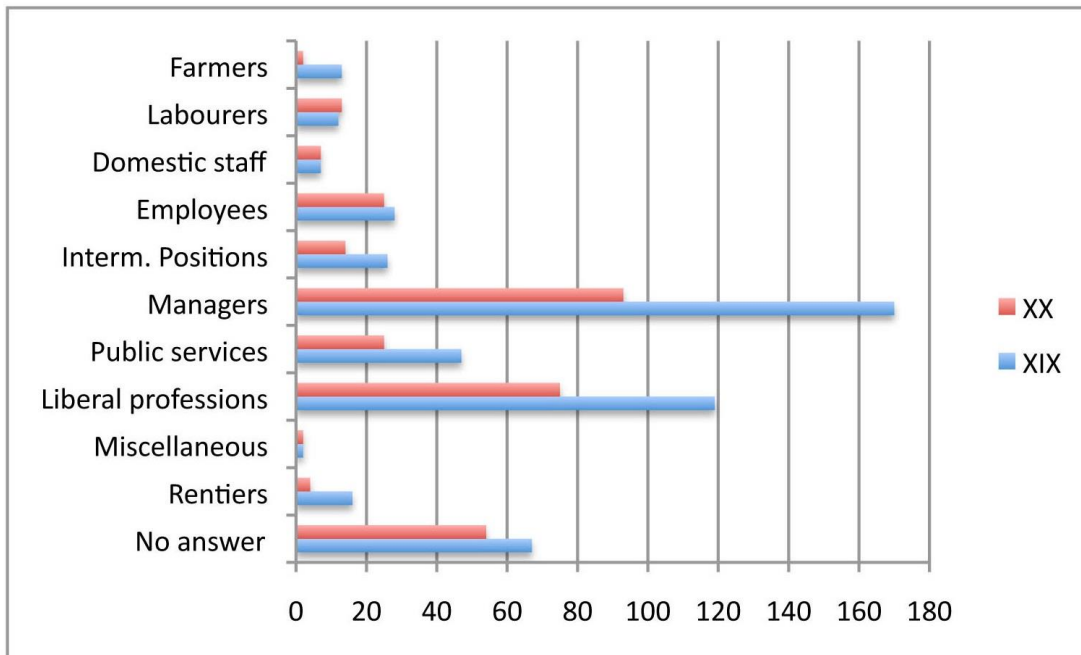


Figure 4: Socioprofessional categories of fathers of *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France in Rome (based on the classification established by Adeline Daumard), 19th and 20th centuries.

	19 th Century.	20 th Century
0 Farmers	1,58%	0,24%
1 Manual and urban labourers	1,46%	1,58%
2 Domestic staff	0,85%	0,85%
3 Employees of private businesses	3,40%	3%
4 Intermediate position between salaried work and management	3,16%	1,70%
5 Managers	20,70%	11,32%
6 Public services	5,72%	3%
7 Liberal professions	14,5%	9,15%
8 Miscellaneous	0,24%	0,24%
9 No profession (property owners, rentiers, unspecified)	1,94%	0,49%
10 No answer	8,16%	6,57%
100%	61,63%	38,37%
	102 years	68 years

There, he studied under two professors who had been awarded the Prix de Rome: Léon Cogniet (painting, 1817) and Joseph Duret (sculpture, 1823). Chapu went on to obtain the Prix de Rome for sculpture in 1855, aged 22. Upon his return from Rome, he frequented numerous Salons and universal exhibitions, and obtained a *médaille d'honneur*. He enjoyed many commissions and became a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts, a position he held from 1883 until his death. He was an officer of the Légion d'honneur and became a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1880 before later taking on its presidency. As an academy member, he held a chair at the Institut alongside none other than the marquis Charles-Melchior de Vogüé, an archaeologist and member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. In his trajectory from the concierge's lodge occupied by his father to a chair at the Institut de France, Chapu reaped the advantages offered by Republican meritocracy.

The second example is that of Fortuné Layraud, who offers a particularly interesting case since he obtained the Prix de Rome for painting in 1863, the year of the Salon des Refusés. His biography offers a mirror image of that of Édouard Manet. Born in 1833 in La Roche-sur-le-Buis (Drôme) to a farmer and innkeeper father, Layraud was a shepherd on the Mont Ventoux up to the age of twenty. With support from an uncle, he was able to enter the Beaux-Arts de Marseille, and later received a bursary from the Conseil Général de la Drôme to continue his studies at the École impériale et spéciale des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 1855 under the direction of Léon Cogniet. Layraud was thirty years old when he was awarded the Prix de Rome. Upon his return, he obtained an authorization from Léon Gambetta to follow the army as a war sketch artist. Invited to Portugal by a diplomat who he had met in Rome, he became the official painter of the Portuguese royal family. When he once again returned to Paris, Layraud painted portraits of politicians including Gambetta and Émile Loubet. He ended his career as the director of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Valenciennes in 1892.

He was also an officer of the Légion d'honneur and a *chevalier* of the Ordre du Christ de Portugal and the Ordre d'Isabelle la Catholique. He offers another example of a dizzying social ascension that, as in the case of Henri Chapu, owed everything to Republican meritocracy.

The state of the art of the state: the collapse of the academic system

Much has been written on the collapse of the Beaux-Arts system and its replacement by a modern system more conducive to the emergence of the various avant-gardes of the 20th century. Yet the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris long remained an attractive institution for artists from France and from further afield. The minutes and registers of the school were sent to members of the Institut between 1888 and 1892, and allow for an evaluation of the admitted students according to their discipline, gender and nationalities.³⁸ The predominance of architects in the school's registers during this period is one aspect that is immediately obvious when analyzing the data. In 1888, architects represented 54.2% of the total body of 1573 students, and included a significant minority of foreigners (around 9%). A disciplinary breakdown further reveals that painters made up 32% of the student body, with sculptors and engravers accounting for 12% and 1.8% of students respectively.³⁹ Despite the struggles of the 1880s, women were still excluded from the Beaux-Arts during this period.⁴⁰ Another document, which records the number of inscriptions alongside the number of admissions for the years between 1900 and 1932 again reflects a preponderance of architects, as well as recording the first cohorts of women to enter the institution: though in 1900 only 25 women painters studied at the Beaux-Arts alongside 777 men, this state of affairs soon shifted

to the point that there were 145 women painters for 130 men in 1932.⁴¹ However, only a handful of women would be awarded the Prix de Rome. Amongst them was Lucienne Heuvelmans, who won first prize for sculpture in 1911. 24 women in all were awarded the Prix de Rome: eleven musicians, five painters, five sculptors and three engravers. The Prix de Rome for architecture was never won by a woman.

In the 20th century, this school, whose art associated historical and literary culture with technical virtuosity, operated to provide what Pierre Bourdieu called "*hauts fonctionnaires de l'art*" – senior civil servants of art.⁴² The system could not remain entirely untouched by social and cultural developments, however, and the recruitment of professors indeed evolved over time. Though some winners of the Prix de Rome still loomed large into the 20th century – Jules Lefebvre (Prix 1861), Gabriel Ferrier (Prix 1872), Robert Pougheon, (Prix 1914), Nicolas Untersteller (Prix 1928), amongst others⁴³ – they would gradually be replaced by a cohort of outsiders with a number of shared characteristics. This new generation of teachers had not travelled to Rome but had rather trained under masters such as Alexandre Cabanel and William Bouguereau. Before becoming *chefs d'atelier*, they had travelled to North Africa (Fernand Cormon, Lucien Simon, Émile Renard, Paul-Albert Laurens), and had exhibited abroad. They had taught in private ateliers (the Académie Julian or the Académie de la Grande Chaumière) and counted the likes of Émile Bernard, Chaïm Soutine and Jacques Villon amongst their former students.

From 1950 onwards, the painting studios of the Beaux-Arts were overseen by artists specializing in the decorative arts and who drew their inspiration from the likes of Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse

³⁸ Total number of young Frenchmen and Foreigners admitted and authorized to study at the École from 1888 to 1892. Overall total: 1888 : 1573. 1889 : 1528. 1890 : 1598. 1891 : 1551. 1892 : 1698. Minutes sent to the Direction 17th November 1892.

³⁹ Today, the ENSBA counts around 600 students. The reduction of the overall number is mainly due to the separation of the architecture section after 1968, which was subsequently divided into U.P.A (Unités pédagogiques d'architecture).

⁴⁰ Marina Sauer, *L'Entrée des Femmes à l'École des Beaux-arts, 1880-1923*. Paris, énsba-a, coll. Beaux-arts histoire, 1990. In *La Citoyenne*, Pauline Orell denounced the situation in the following terms "I will shock no-one when I say that women are

excluded from the École des Beaux-Arts as they are from almost all other spheres.", p.7. Our translation.

⁴¹ Statistics of candidates enrolled and received in the *concours* of admission to the École and the number of diplomas awarded for the years 1900-1910-1916-1920-1925-1930- 1932. Archives nationales, AJ52 909.

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, 'L'institutionnalisation de l'anomie', *Les Cahiers du Musée d'art moderne*, n°19-20, June 1987, p.9.

⁴³ Robert Pougheon replaced Jacques Ibert (suspended by the Vichy regime) at the head of the Académie de France in Rome from 1942 to 1944. Nicolas Intersteller directed the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts from 1948 to 1968.

rather than from the canonical masters. Some belonged to the Peintres de la réalité poétique group (Maurice Brianchon, Raymon Legueult), or exhibited their works in Parisian galleries (Lucien Coutaud, Robert Cami, Gustave Singier, Jean Aujame, Roger Chapelain-Midy, Jean Souverbie, Roger Chastel). They moved in the glamorous circles of the 1950s, and were supported by the French art market.⁴⁴ An examination of the list of laureates after 1950 meanwhile reveals that it was the atelier Brianchon which monopolized the Prix de peinture until the final year of the Prix de Rome, with 11 laureates in just 18 years. Its closest rival was the atelier Legueult, with 5 laureates over the same period. The breakdown of the *concours* stemmed for the most part from the fact that the chosen subjects lent themselves only to dull academic exercises: rural scenes and allegories, stricken families, religious subjects, and so on.⁴⁵ This was a model running on empty.

During the Second World War, a new generation of painters had organized its own salons: the Salon des moins de 30 ans (1941-1948), the Salon des Jeunes peintres (1950), the Salon des Peintres témoins de leur temps (1951), the Salon de la Jeune peinture (1954). The most active circle was the Group de la Ruche, which would form the core of the future Coopérative des Malassis. All outsiders with relation to the Beaux-Arts, these artists sought to liquidate the aesthetic refinement of the École de Paris and the 'post-bonnardisme' of the last cohort of teachers; they took direct aim at their adversaries with their 'Hommage au vert' at the 16th salon de la Jeune Peinture in 1965.⁴⁶ The following year, the revolt exploded within the walls of the Beaux-Arts itself when the school's students, who were still begrudgingly submitting to the rules of academic painting, discovered that they were playing a rigged game: it emerged that the

professors had reached an agreement to award the grand prix to their students on a rotating basis, and Legueult warned his students that in 1966 they thus had no hope of winning. Claude Viallat, Pierre Buraglio, Vincent Bioulès and Michel Parmentier set themselves up as the *logistes du désapprentissage* and sabotaged the *concours*. These artists would go on to become the founding figures of movements such as Support-Surface and BMPT (Buren, Mosset, Parmentier Toroni).⁴⁷ In May 1968, it was the turn of the architecture students to initiate the rebellion:

We mean to fight against the domination of our profession by the Conseil de l'ordre and other corporate organisms... We are against a pedagogical method based on the system of bosses, we are against the conformist ideology propagated by the system... The teaching of architecture should not consist of a repetition of the work of the boss by the pupil until the latter is a carbon copy of the former.⁴⁸

The overthrow of the Grand Prix de Rome and its *concours* by the students in May 1968 directly affected the members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, at the same time as it worked to the advantage of Minister of Culture André Malraux who hoped to undertake a radical transformation of artistic education. Malraux had already anticipated the changes to come by appointing Balthus as the head of the Académie de France in Rome in 1961. He went further still by removing architecture from the purview of the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts and by modifying the selection process for the Académie de France in Rome, replacing the *concours* with a system of individual applications.

Conclusion

The *Dictionnaire biographique des pensionnaires de l'Académie de France à Rome* aims to index every

⁴⁴ Annie Verger, 'L'art d'estimer l'art. Comment classer l'incomparable?', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n° 66/67, March 1987. In this article, see the chapter 'L'invention du palmarès' on the rankings of artists published in *Connaissance des arts* between 1955 and 1976.

⁴⁵ 'Les cinquante derniers Premiers grands prix de Rome', Exhibition catalogue, Musée Picasso-Antibes, 15 July - 31 October 1977. Presses offset Devaye, Cannes, 1977.

⁴⁶ Francis Parent, Raymond Perrot, 'Le salon de la Jeune peinture. Une histoire 1950-1983', Éd. J.P. 1983.

⁴⁷ Maria Tyl, *Mai-68 : Révolution symbolique ou inertie institutionnelle ? L'enseignement artistique à l'école nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts dans la*

tourmente, Paris, les éditions du Littéraire, 2017, p.94. This recent publication brings together archival work and a series of interviews with some of the key individuals active in the events of May 1968.

⁴⁸ The leaders of the rebellion were Bruno Queysanne, professor of philosophy and sociology, and Gille Aillaud, son of architect Émile Aillaud and Pierre Buraglio, who were joined by artists who created the atelier populaire des Beaux-Arts. Interviews with Burno Queysanne 27th May and 3rd June 2010. For more information of contemporary art movements after 1945, see Annie Verger 'Le champ des avant-gardes', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°88, June 1991, in particular 'Questions de terminologie', p. 8. 'Engagement politique et indépendance artistique', p. 22 and 'Un groupe Malassis', p. 24.

artist selected as part of a *concours* between 1666 and 1968. However, the search for information as to changes in ideas, styles and society entailed by the writing of its entries invites a broader reflection that accounts for each of these areas. Since the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts that trained the *pensionnaires* is amongst the *grandes écoles* of France,⁴⁹ we have looked to the sociologists and historians who had published studies of these institutions: Victor Karady,⁵⁰ Jean-Noël Luc and Alain Barbé,⁵¹ Terry Shinn,⁵² and Gérard Vincent.⁵³ In order to understand the issues at play and acquire the means of analyzing the complex relationships between the various parties in the field, we also drew on the work of Pierre Bourdieu who set out to study precisely these kinds of structures:

We cannot understand the symbolic violence of what were once hastily designated as the "ideological state apparatuses" unless we analyze in detail the relationship between the objective characteristics of the organization that exercise it and the socially constituted dispositions of the agents upon whom it is exercised.⁵⁴

A subsequent cartographic study planned for a future publication will accompany the research presented here. A spatial and geographic study of the places of birth, education and death of *pensionnaires* will better reveal the phenomena of clustering around centres of power (Paris, Versailles) and of study (former provincial academies). Another approach which could allow for an estimation of the capital accumulated by the former *pensionnaires* over three centuries would consist in the locating of their works in Paris, in the provinces, and abroad. All these different perspectives will enrich our knowledge of the academic system, its evolutions and its capacity for renewal – or its capacity for fixedness – across generations.

⁴⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'État. Grandes écoles et esprit de corps*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1989. See Chapter 1 'Un état de la structure', *Le modèle, Ensemble des établissements d'enseignement supérieur* (n-84), Table 8, 'Sigles et abréviations'.

⁵⁰ Victor Karady, 'Normaliens et autres enseignants à la Belle Époque. Note sur l'origine sociale et la réussite dans une profession intellectuelle', *Revue française de sociologie*, 1972, p. 35-58.

⁵¹ Jean-Noël Luc & Alain Barbé, *Des Normaliens. Histoire de l'École normale supérieure de Saint-Cloud*, Paris, Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1982.

⁵² Terry Shinn, *Savoir scientifique et pouvoir social : L'École polytechnique, 1794-1914*, Paris, Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1980.

⁵³ Gérard Vincent, *Sciences Po. Histoire d'une réussite*, Paris, Olivier Orban, 1987.

⁵⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Laetitia C. Clough, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 3.