

1780s. The barb contained in a sale catalog praising the attributes of a collector is a measure of its confidence. “What goodness he brings to young artists, whom he encourages with paternal care! What a difference this is from those who loudly call themselves mentors, who wish to guide and direct and offer counsel—and then expect to be blindly obeyed” (111).

When Denis Diderot denounced “the damnable race of *amateurs*” in his 1767 Salon, the term had begun to describe both the culprit and his correction. Diderot meant to target the academy’s honorary associates in his long list of accusations against *amateurs*, who “disturb the studio with their wheedling presence and inept counsel” (305–6). This sort of criticism, by turns satirical and scathing, intensified over the next two decades. For many, the figure was a proxy for the Académie royale. To mock the *amateur* as a charlatan or tyrant was by extension an aspersion on the monarchy. Jean-Bernard Restout, president and cofounder of the revolutionary-era Commune des Arts, took up the cudgel to declare that the Académie royale was an institution fit only for throttling talent.

Guichard’s presentation of the *amateur* is capacious enough to include both defenders and opponents of the Académie royale. The terms used to launch a new association for encouraging artistic talent during the Revolution vindicates her approach. The Société des Amis des Arts, founded in 1791 and in existence for nearly a century thereafter, introduced subscription drives to buy works of art for public display. “True *amateurs*,” an early blueprint for the society announced in pointed contrast to the academy’s private conclaves, “enrich the public domain with renowned works that may serve as lessons and examples” (336). In Guichard’s account, the figure emerged from the Revolution as a patriot. “The centrality of *amateurs* in the artistic space of the Enlightenment,” she writes in the conclusion, “corresponds to an ongoing recalibration between the individual and institutions of the *ancien régime*. The contrasting patriotic representations of *amateurs* fit logically within the evolution of political culture in the second half of the eighteenth century” (341). The observation is an example of the kind of contextual framing Guichard employs, which integrates consumers of fine arts into the century’s ideological currents with skill and sensitivity. With its exhaustive display of how *amateurs* experienced the art they loved—how they thought and wrote about it, where they acquired and displayed it, and what kinds of language they used to describe it—*Les amateurs d’art à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* is a rich and original work that enlarges our understanding of the visual and political culture of the eighteenth century.

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Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime. By *Victoria Johnson*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Pp. xvi+281. \$45.00.

The question at the heart of Victoria Johnson’s book is an intriguing one: how did the Paris Opera, or the Académie royale de musique as it was known during the Old Regime, avoid disbandment during the French Revolution? If any prerevolutionary institution exemplified the luxurious consumption and aristocratic privilege decried by the revolutionaries, the Opera was it. Yet the Paris Commune, which took over governance of the Opera from the Maison du roi in February 1790, worked hard to reorganize the institution for the glory of the new regime, and Maximilien Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety, in the midst of the Terror in the spring of 1794,

approved the troupe's relocation from a venue on the outskirts of town to a more commercially viable site in the heart of the city. Although they agreed on little else, almost all political partisans during the revolutionary decade believed that the government needed to sustain the Paris Opera because of its importance to the vigorous cultural nationalism of the period; in 1804, Napoleon recast the institution as the Académie impériale de musique, restoring most of the privileges the company had enjoyed before 1789.

Johnson, a sociologist and a professor of organizational studies at the University of Michigan, turns to theories from her field of study to resolve the dilemma. In particular, she resorts to an idea known as "imprinting," which stresses the enduring importance of the institutional forms and practices created at the founding of an organization in its subsequent history. In the specific case of the Paris Opera, she argues, the circumstances of its founding as a royal academy under Louis XIV in the 1669–72 period account for the institution's survival more than a century later. The Opera's academic status distinguished it from competitors such as the Comédie-Française and the Comédie-Italienne, which were not classified as academies although they enjoyed somewhat similar privileges under the Old Regime. Furthermore, the repertory created for the theater in the 1670s and 1680s by its most famous director, the wily Italian courtier Jean-Baptiste (Giovanni Battista) Lully, remained on the company's stage throughout the eighteenth century. At the onset of revolution in 1789, Johnson suggests, France's new cultural arbiters, accustomed to the Opera's academic status and the glamour of its repertory, had difficulty imagining a French nation shorn of its indigenous Opera tradition. Although the company's new masters insisted on works that substituted soldiers and commoners for kings and aristocrats, they continued to subsidize this expensive institution during the most difficult moments of the Revolution.

Historians will find much to like in Johnson's treatment of the two moments in the history of the Paris Opera: she explores in depth the company's founding in the 1669–72 period and its fate in the early years of the Revolution. The notes are full of references to the work of Robert Isherwood, James Johnson (no relation to the author), Elizabeth Bartlet, Jérôme de la Gorce, and other recent scholars of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French Opera. She has mined the relevant archives for these two periods and digested the printed primary material, including many revolutionary pamphlets. Against the strength of the Lully "foundational" legend, she emphasizes the importance of Pierre Perrin, a seventeenth-century poet who became convinced of the need to establish a French lyric theater tradition to combat the contemporary Italian supremacy in the field. It was Perrin, not Lully, who conceived the idea of establishing a French "academy" of music along the lines of the already existing academies of letters, painting, and natural philosophy, and it was Perrin who sold the idea to Colbert and Louis XIV. But Perrin was a less able businessman than he was a poet or cultural visionary, and he was ultimately forced to sell the academic privilege to the Opera to Lully during a stay in debtor's prison in 1672. Lully was the more successful musician and administrator, but it was Perrin who hit upon the academic idea that Johnson argues was vital to the Opera's survival over a century later. Similarly, Johnson's detailed history of the administrative oversight of the Opera during the constitutional monarchy phase of the Revolution (1789–92) elegantly sorts out the complex and often baffling institutional history of the company in this period.

Readers of this journal, however, may find the structure of the book somewhat puzzling. After an introductory chapter devoted to a review of the relevant organizational studies literature, Johnson turns not to the 1669–72 interlude but to the early

Revolution, which gets two full chapters. She then abruptly plunges into the seventeenth-century Perrin/Lully interlude, lingering over it for three more chapters. Next, the century between these two episodes receives cursory treatment in a single chapter, followed by a conclusion that summarizes the fate of the Paris Opera from the proclamation of the Republic in September 1792 to the imperial coronation of Napoleon in 1804. This structure presumably addresses the issues raised by Johnson's decision to use the Opera as a case study for the "imprinting" thesis debated by organizational studies specialists, but it will leave historians unsatisfied. The chapter on the intervening century of the Opera's history hints at the struggles over administrative control, evolutions in repertory, and the place of the Opera in the political culture of the Old Regime, but it raises more questions than it answers. The work of scholars such as James Johnson and William Weber suggests that other developments over this century were more important to the prestige of the Opera than its initial creation as an Academy. Similarly, might not the survival of the Opera during the 1790s have as much to do with the fluid politics and ideologies of the decade as with the academic prestige of the institution? As with so much of the cultural history of the Revolution, one senses that issues raised during the Directory (1795–99) may loom far larger in this story than Johnson lets on. That said, however, students of the cultural and institutional history of the Old Regime and Revolution will find much of interest in this searching exploration of the fate of the Opera after 1789.

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The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity.

By *Michael Camille*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pp. xviii+439. \$49.00.

This is an amazing book, and one of the most interesting books written on the themes of Paris, capital of the nineteenth century. I learned a great deal from it, of course, but somehow what matters more is that I very much enjoyed reading it. Ostensibly, it's about gargoyles, but its overall theme is to consider the place of Paris in western modernity from Baudelaire to Baudrillard.

It is only after the revolution of 1830 that Paris, in Benjamin's celebrated apothegm, became the capital of the nineteenth century; and so this book, sensibly enough, begins in 1843 with Viollet-le-Duc and Lassus's project for the restoration of Notre Dame cathedral, that heart of medieval Paris, and which had been once again made world famous by Hugo's novel of 1831, a text that Viollet had studied with great care. And as regards the gargoyles, some of these beasts may have—in medieval times—already clung to the western balustrade of the Cathedral, but the ones we see today—or rather the originals of the restored figures that we see today—were most likely born of Viollet's imagination, though even that is not quite clear: there is "no trace of the original drawing for the Stryge ("the pensive demon") which very quickly became and is still today the symbol of Notre Dame and, for some, of Paris and even Frenchness.

But why study these curious excrescences? Because, to quote H el ene Cixous, "the uncanny (Unheimliche)" (this favored Freudian concept) "presents itself, first of all, only at the fringe of something else," and Michael Camille is best known, of course, for his brilliant work on medieval marginal annotations which showed that medieval culture was much less monolithic, and much more fissiparous, and more critical than we thought, and as regards architecture, this meant that cathedrals may have been

Find many great new & used options and get the best deals for *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the* at the best online prices at eBay! Free delivery for many products! **Item description.** "Yet, despite its long association with the royal court, its special privileges, and the splendor of its performances, the Opera itself was spared, even protected, by Revolutionary officials." See all **Item description.** About this item. **Download Citation |** On Jan 22, 2010, Marco Santoro and others published *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime* | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. **This edited volume brings together academic specialists writing on the multi-media operatic form from a range of disciplines: comparative literature, history, sociology, and philosophy. The presence in the volume's title of Pierre Bourdieu, the leading cultural sociologist of the late twentieth century, signals the editors' intention to synthesise advances in social science with advances in musicological and other scholarship on opera. Why did the Opera survive the Revolution and the Terror? How could an institution so blatantly associated with the Old Regime, with luxury, elitism, and aristocratic privilege remain intact and emerge to become a favorite institution of Napoleon? The answer lies within the organizational strategy that led to the formation of the Académie Opéra under Pierre Perrin during the 1660s, which allowed the Opera to prevail under the most diverse political circumstances. In her compelling and beautifully illustrated *Backstage at the Revolution* Victoria Johnson updates classical institutional theories of organization to answer the question: Why did revolutionaries intent on destroying realms of privilege spare the royal Paris Opera?**