Bonnie Effros

Artistic, scholarly, and popular depictions of the 'première race' in late nineteenth-century France*

In 1861, Laurens Alma-Tadema exhibited "The Education of the Children of Clovis" in Antwerp (Figure 1). Presented publicly just nine years after he had moved to the city to enroll at the Royal Academy, the work was Alma-Tadema's first major artistic success. Using the sixth-century Histories of Gregory of Tours and relying heavily on Augustin Thierry's "Recits des temps mérovingiens" (1840), Alma-Tadema drew his inspiration from the "picturesque" elements of Frankish society.[1] This painting, with its intimate glimpse into the daily lives of the Merovingian royal family during the late fifth century, differed significantly from more traditional history painting's emphasis on the didactic potential of symbolic actions in classical and Biblical stories. Alma-Tadema's focus on imagined everyday activities in the Frankish court, a style known as historical genre, was symptomatic of the increasing fluidity on the margins of grand narrative history painting.[2] Despite later criticism that historical genre amounted to little more than "costume drama",[3] this style of painting gained prominence in the 1830s as academic painters reached to a wider variety of sources for their work including the writings of liberal historians and historical novelists.[4]

Alma-Tadema's choice of the Merovingian period was somewhat unusual in that the era had previously not enjoyed frequent artistic attention with the exception of scenes of national significance like the Battle of Tolbiac (Figure 2). The baptism of Clovis and venerated saints like the Merovingian queens Clothild and Radegund, and the late Gallo-Roman nun Geneviève, were also popular subjects.[5] Yet, in the Low Countries, critics interpreted Alma-Tadema's venture into the early Middle Ages as a long overdue reconsideration of the French historical school of painting and its focus on the classical world. The painting of Clovis's court and family, which likewise appealed to Flemish nationalist claims to Frankish heritage, enjoyed critical approval in Belgium and was purchased by the Antwerp Society of Fine Arts; as a result of a lottery, it found its way soon afterward into King Leopold's collection.[6] Emboldened by his success, Alma-Tadema next composed an

* I would like to thank Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz for their invitation to join my fellow contributors at the colloquium organized in May, 2005, at the Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, where I received helpful references from Mayke de Jong, Agnès Graceffa, and Ian Wood. I am also grateful to participants at the 18th International Conference on Medievalism at Saint Louis University, the Quodlibet Society for Medieval Studies at Cornell University, and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Binghamton University, who provided very useful comments for ways in which to improve earlier versions of this paper in fall, 2003. I owe especially great thanks to Maria Gindhart and Laura Morowitz, who each read the manuscript in its entirety and gave critical suggestions on the paper, not all of which could be incorporated in this short space. Cécile Treffort went beyond the call of duty and took photographs of the interior of the Hôtel de Ville de Poitiers; David Laber provided computer wizardry and improved the scanned images as necessary. Harpur College of Arts and Sciences at Binghamton University funded ten of the images and permissions for this essay, and I am indebted to our former dean Jean-Pierre Mileur for his generous support of this undertaking.

[1] Teio Meedendorp/Luuk Pijl, Alma-Tadema's artistic training: critics on the continent 1852–1870, in: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, ed. Edwin Becker (New York 1997) 21–30, at 22–24.

[2] Laurence des Cars, Jean-Paul Laurens et la peinture d'histoire sous la Troisième République, in: Jean-Paul Laurens 1838–1921: Peintre d'histoire. Paris, Musée d'Orsay 6 October 1997–4 janvier 1998; Toulouse, Musée des Augustins 2 février–4 mai 1998 (Paris 1997) 23–34, at 25.

[3] David Green/Peter Seddon, Introduction: art, historiographical practice and the ends of history, in: History Painting Reassessed: The Representation of History in Contemporary Art (Manchester 2000) 1–17, at 7–9.

[4] Stephen Bann, Editorial, in: Word and Image 16, 1 (2000) 1–6, at 1.

[5] Inventaire après catalogues des sujets iconographiques relatifs aux mérovingiens et présentés aux expositions officielles des Beaux-Arts de 1763 à 1945, in: Clovis et la mémoire artistique: Ouvrage publié dans le cadre de l'exposition du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Reims, 22 juin–16 novembre 1996, ed. Veronique Alemany-Dessaint (Reims 1996) 179–201.

[6] Rosemary J. Barrow, Lawrence Alma-Tadema (London 2001) 15–20.

intimate scene in which the sixth-century poet Venantius Fortunatus was shown reading poems to his patroness, the former queen Radegund, and the abbess Agnes, within the walls of the female monastery in Poitiers. This easel painting of the holy friends in the cloister won a gold medal in Amsterdam in 1862.[7]

Between 1864 and 1878, Alma-Tadema depicted the early Middle Ages only a few more times. He, like Thierry who had proved so influential in his choice of scenes, seems to have been particularly drawn to the bloody career of the Merovingian queen Fredegund (Figure 3). When he showed "Queen Fredegund at the Death-Bed of Bishop Praetextatus" at the Paris Salon in 1865, however, French art critics failed to embrace Alma-Tadema's rendering of this notorious member of the Frankish dynasty. Their qualms apparently pertained less to the painting's negative subject matter than to what they perceived as his meticulous attention to chronologically appropriate props and setting. Regarding this piece, Paul Mantz commented icily in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts: "There is thus a drama in Mr. Alma-Tadema's painting, but a drama that is stifled and lost in skillfully combined details of Merovingian bric à brac." He continued, "We are absolutely not competent enough to assess the accuracy of the items of furniture, clothing, jewels and weapons, and we can only regret the fact that Augustin Thierry is no longer with us to appreciate the verisimilitude of a work that would certainly have aroused his interest."[8] This was an ironic jab – in that Thierry was widely known to have gone completely blind by 1828, two years before publishing "Récits des temps mérovingiens"[9] – yet a direct reflection of the salon juries' view. The statement underlined their discomfort with Alma-Tadema's attention to archaeological minutiae, which they believed hindered the skilled execution and overall aesthetic enjoyment of his paintings.[10] Aside from three watercolors and an oil painting made in the 1870s that focused on the demise of Galswinth, the woman on account of whom Fredegund was temporarily put aside by her husband Chilperic, Alma-Tadema did not produce any further major works addressing the early medieval Franks.[11]

While critics outside of France praised Alma-Tadema's efforts to achieve archaeological correctness,[12] few artists in France who opted to depict scenes from this relatively obscure period gave much attention to accurate detail in clothing, weaponry, and furniture. Évariste-Vital Luminais, a five-time medal winner at the Paris Salon and a member of the Légion d'Honneur,[13] created a large number of works culled from the history of the Gauls who were the subject of renewed interest from the 1830s.[14] He also devoted attention to the Franks in a smaller group of paintings. Most famous among the latter was "Les énervés de Jumièges", executed in 1880. In this painting, Luminais depicted the mutilated sons of Clovis II who after their failed revolt were sent down the Seine immobilized upon a raft (Figure 4).[15] The non-traditional historical theme of the work was not widely appreciated, nor were those that followed. In 1883, when Luminais exhibited an oil painting entitled "The Last of the Merovingians" at the annual salon, critic Charles Bigot wearily expressed the hope that this title signaled the artist's intention to move on to other more suitable topics.[16]

For our purposes, it is important to note that despite their unorthodox themes, Luminais's paintings exhibited a generic appearance with respect to the subjects' clothing and setting. In general, the backgrounds of the pieces evoked neither a particular time nor place, and merely suggested distance from the present;[17] they

[7] Teio Meedendorp/Luuk Pijl, Catalogue, in: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, ed. Edwin Becker (New York 1997) 128–267, at 136–137.

[8] Paul Mantz, Salon de 1865, in: Gazette des Beaux-Arts 18 (1865) 489–523, at 508–510. English translation taken from: Meedendorp/Pijl, Alma-Tadema's artistic training 25.

[9] Marcel Gauchet, Les Lettres sur l'histoire de France d'Augustin Thierry: L'alliance austère du patriotisme et de la science, in: Les lieux de mémoire 2, 1, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris 1986) 247–316, at 284.

[10] Jean J. Guiffrey, Exposition des Beaux-Arts à Anvers, in: Gazette des Beaux-Arts 17 (1864) 367–374, at 370–371.

[11] Barrow, Lawrence Alma-Tadema 16–18. Alma-Tadema, like Augustin Thierry, attributed the responsibility for Galswinth's murder largely to Fredegund, whereas Gregory of Tours exclusively blamed her husband Chilperic. Ian N. Wood, The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751 (London 1994) 127.

[12] Helen Zimmern, L. Alma Tadema, Royal Academician: His Life and Work (The Art Annual for 1886, London 1886) 6–9.

[13] Nadine Berthelier, Biographie, in: Évariste Vital Luminais: Peintre des Gaules, 1821–1896. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Carcassonnne, 18 October 2002–4 janvier 2003, Musée de l'Ardenne, Charleville-Mézières, 14 février–11 mai 2003 (Carcassonne 2002) 11.

[14] Krzysztof Pomian, Francs et Gaulois, in: Les lieux de mémoire 3, 1, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris 1992) 40–105, at 78–80.

[15] François Bergot/Marie Pessiot/Gilles Grandjean/Alain Pougetoux, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen: guide des collections XVIIIe, XIXe, et XXe siècles (Paris 1994) 144–145.

[16] Charles Bigot, Le Salon de 1883, in: Gazette des Beaux-Arts 27 (1883) 457–476, at 472.

[17] Unlike Gustave Doré's illustrations of Jean Michaud's Histoire des Croisades executed in 1877, which similarly lacked attention to historical accuracy, Luminais's paintings did not have the same Romantic emphasis on chivalry and spirituality. Jean Michaud,

contained little to distract from the narrative, a notable feature in a time when many advocates of history painting still valued "painters' punctilious regard for accuracy in small details in pursuit of larger truths."[18] Unlike painters of prehistory like Fernand Cormon who accurately depicted period artifacts in their works to lend their renderings of distant times greater credibility (a particularly pressing need since many of these works were intended for display in natural history museums),[19] artists who evoked the early Middle Ages largely did not take similar precautions. Even in the case of late antique or early medieval encounters that afforded the opportunity for greater specificity of chronology such as in Luminais's 1848 portrayal of the battle of Tolbiac, the armament and helmets were entirely anachronistic. He later applied the same style of headgear to a painting of Gallic plunderers.[20] The indiscriminate use of period weapons produced similar shortcomings in Luminais's depiction of the death of Chramn, the son of Chlothar I who was burnt alive along with his wife and children as punishment for rebelling against the king.[21] The short sword belonging to the king was more Gallic than early medieval in its style.[22]

Luminais was far from alone in making these errors: his student Albert Maignan, who himself owned a number of archaeological artifacts from the period, shared both his teacher's interest in the Middle Ages and his propensity to eschew historical accuracy in his depictions of the early Middle Ages. In a painting entitled "Hommage à Clovis II" (1883), Maignan portrayed the young seventh-century king, son of Dagobert and Nantild, dwarfed by an enormous throne. Rather than modeling this furniture after the surviving throne attributed to Dagobert and preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale, Maignan relied largely on his own imagination (Figure 5).[23] A variety of historical writings, but mainly those of Augustin Thierry which were pointed in their criticism of the Merovingian regime, excited artists like Maignan far more than any study of relevant archaeological remains.[24] Influenced by Luminais and the works of Jean-Paul Laurens, the latter of whom will be discussed at length below, Maignan used the architectural details in the painting of the child-king Clovis II not to evoke an accurate image of the early Middle Ages but to highlight the peril in which France found itself due to the historical excesses of this notorious hereditary monarchy.

Highly conservative in the type of works they promoted, the annual salons in and of themselves appear to have provided little impetus for artists to innovate with respect to the archaeological accuracy of their creations. Those painters and sculptors who nonetheless chose to render excavated finds in their depiction of Gallic or early medieval scenes often did so anachronistically. Their haphazard selections included a jumbled assortment of artifacts spanning from the Bronze Age to the early Middle Ages despite the availability of archaeological models from which they might work.[25] Not only did the critics dislike archaeological detail, they were even more vociferous in their denunciation of artists who altered the classical human form in pursuit of scientific accuracy. As evidenced by the furor provoked by Fernand Cormon's painting "Cain" (1880), which portrayed the earliest humans as ape-like soon after Charles Darwin' theory of evolution had caused a great

Histoire des Croisades (Paris 1877).

[18] Patricia M. Burnham/Lucretia Hoover Giese, Introduction. History painting: how it works, in: Redefining American History Painting (Cambridge 1995) 1–14, at 7.

[19] Maria P. Gindhart, The Art and Science of Late Nineteenth-Century Image of Human Prehistory at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, unpublished dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia 2002) 13–17; 161–279.

[20] Françoise Daum, Luminais et les historiens de son temps: "Le petit musée archéologique de Évariste Luminais", in: Évariste Vital Luminais: Peintre des Gaules, 1821–1896. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Carcassonnne, 18 October 2002–4 janvier 2003, Musée de l'Ardenne, Charleville-Mézières, 14 février–11 mai 2003 (Carcassonne 2002) 30–41, at 34.

[21] Edward James, The Franks (Oxford 1988) 169.

[22] Daum, Luminais et les historiens 36–37; Heino Neumayer, Die merowingerzeitlichen Funde aus Frankreich (Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Bestandskataloge 8, Berlin 2002) 45.

[23] Le moyen-âge et les peintres français de la fin du XIXe siècle (Jean-Paul Laurens et ses contemporaines.) Château-Musée de Cagnes-sur-Mer 3 mai–8 juin 1980 (Cagnes-sur-Mer 1980) 51–53.

[24] Henri Olleris, Mémento du Salon de peinture, de gravure et de sculpture en 1880 (Paris 1880) 17. The scene portrayed in "Les énervés de Jumièges" was not, however, recounted in Thierry's history. Pierre Vaisse, L'histoire de la France médiévale selon Augustin Thierry et son rôle dans l'histoire de l'art français au 19e siècle, in: Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte 54, 2 (1997) 215–224, at 218.

[25] Michael Dietler, "Our ancestors the Gauls": Archaeology, ethnic nationalism, and the manipulation of Celtic identity in modern Europe, in: American Anthropologist new series 96, 3 (1994) 584–605, at 598.

stir in the scientific and popular imagination, artists faced criticism for daring to transform the human figure in conjunction with scientific advances.[26]

If archaeological finds were not the central impetus for the proliferation of scenes centered on the activities of the Merovingian royal family, why was such subject matter chosen by a growing number of French artists in the latter part of the nineteenth century? Although the second half of the century had witnessed the discovery and publication of numerous early medieval cemeteries uncovered in the wake of engineering projects for railway track, roads, and buildings across France,[27] and national archaeology was regularly taught at the École du Louvre from 1882,[28] nineteenth-century painters excluded these finds from their depictions of the period due at least in part to artistic conventions of the time. In this sense, they echoed the skepticism of contemporary academics regarding the reliability or desirability of material artifacts in historical research.[29] Some part of this denial of appropriate stylistic elements likely also resulted from resistance to a formal acknowledgment of Germanic contributions to French medieval art, history, and culture.[30] As suggested above, far more influential and evocative amongst French painters were the works of Romantic historians, foremost among them, Augustin Thierry.[31]

Before returning to Thierry, we should identify the many venues at which the French public was exposed to discoveries of early medieval grave artifacts from at least the second half of the nineteenth century. By these means, it will be possible to suggest the conscious effort that artists must have made to omit this evidence from their creative endeavors. Although early medieval artifacts were initially excluded from prominent art institutions such as the Louvre due to their perceived aesthetic shortcomings,[32] they did begin to make regular appearances in local antiquarian museums and private collections from the 1830s.[33] Although the Louvre and the Musée de Cluny would eventually acquire small numbers of such pieces through private bequests,[34] the most prominent display of early medieval artifacts was to be found in the Musée des antiquités nationales, which opened its doors in the château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1867 (Figure 6).[35] Judging from the large number of archaeological societies founded in the latter part of the century, many of which possessed their own collections, knowledge of the existence of these artifacts must have also been fairly common among the educated population located far from Paris. Despite the difficulty of measuring how widely knowledge of early medieval remains spread among ordinary citizens, the existence of scores of local museums created to house finds from regional excavations meant that access to early medieval artifacts was easy to procure for those who desired it.

Early medieval artifacts also played to more diverse audiences in the context of exhibits associated with the Expositions universelles from 1867 onward.[36] In fulfilling nationalist aims, the organizers of these events not only encouraged the French to view themselves anew *vis-à-vis* other nations, but they also served to reacquaint

[26] Martha Lucy, Cormon's "Cain" and the problem of the prehistoric body, in: Oxford Art Journal 25, 2 (2002) 107–126.

[27] Rick Szostak, The Role of Transportation in the Industrial Revolution: A Comparison of England and France (Montreal 1991) 60–68.

[28] Alexandre Bertrand, La Gaule avant les gaulois d'après les monuments et les textes: Cours d'archéologie nationale (Paris 1884) unnumbered preface and 1–4.

[29] Arnaldo Momigliano, The rise of antiquarian research, in: The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography (Berkeley 1990) 54–79, at 73–79.

[30] Louis Courajod was one of the fiercest opponents to this limited outlook. Laura Morowitz, 'Une guerre sainte contre l'Académisme': Louis Courajod, the Louvre, and the barbaric Middle Ages, in: This Year's Work in Medievalism 17, ed. Jesse G. Swan/Richard Utz (Eugene 2002) 56–63.

[31] Thierry's impact may be compared to the influence of Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris (1831) and its impact on French imagination regarding medieval cathedrals. Elizabeth Emery/Laura Morowitz, Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France (Aldershot 2003) 17.

[32] Adrien de Longpérier, Musée d'antiquités de Rouen, in: L'atheneum français 11 (1852) 171–173.

[33] These events are described at greater length, in Bonnie Effros, Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages (Berkeley 2003) 55–70.

[34] Les donateurs du Louvre (Paris 1989) 174; Édouard du Sommerard, Musée des thermes et de l'Hôtel de Cluny. Catalogue et description des objets d'art de l'antiquité, du moyen âge et de la Renaissance, exposée au musée (Paris 1883) 635–636.

[35] Karin Lundbeck-Culot, Frederick VII, roi du Danemark, Napoleon III et l'archéologie. Les deux premiers donateurs du Musée des Antiquités Nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Mémoire de l'École du Louvre, Paris 1994).

[36] Bonnie Effros, Selling archaeology and anthropology: early medieval artifacts at the Expositions universelles and the Wiener Weltausstellung, 1867–1900, in: Early Medieval Europe 16, 1 (2008) 23–48.

them with a better understanding of their own history. To underline the distinctiveness of French accomplishments in the arts and sciences, the Parisian fairs included displays on the history of work, art, and anthropology that drew attention to and fostered appreciation for national accomplishments. In 1889 and 1900, the Middle Ages played a prominent role in both recreations like "Paris en 1400" and "Vieux Paris" (both in 1900) and displays of religious art at the Palais du Trocadéro (1889) and stained glass at the Esplanade des Invalides (1900).[37] In 1900, a large part of the Petit-Palais was dedicated to a retrospective exhibition of French art to 1800.[38] This lavish installation, which included a small number of Merovingian-period artifacts, was not only directed at art connoisseurs. Its purpose was to show thousands of visitors the process by which French taste, a highly valued but indistinctly defined quality, developed from the classical era to the recent past.

As the attention given to these artifacts was relatively limited in official guides to the fairs and contemporary reviews, it is difficult to judge the specific impact of archaeological remains of the early Middle Ages on average fair-goers. Nonetheless, it is possible to demonstrate that the display of these pieces at the various Expositions universelles had significant implications for those who excavated, purchased, and studied them.[39] For those like Frédéric Moreau and C. Boulanger who lent private collections to the exhibitions, attracting significant publicity to themselves and their possessions, this attention meant that the artifacts gained additional value on the antiquities market (Figure 7).[40] The very language with which these objects were described also changed, with many scholars referring to them anachronistically, but not surprisingly in the context of the fairs, as examples of early medieval manufacturing.[41] More generally, the inclusion of such pieces in retrospectives on the history of French labor and art meant that the discussion of these objects was no longer limited to antiquarian societies or the publications of French archaeologists. Their presence at the Expositions universelles legitimized their worth as an officially recognized part of the French patrimony.

Another way in which to measure the rising attractiveness of archaeological artifacts as collectors' items is the incentive that existed to copy them. Some contemporaries complained that the presentation of medieval objects, just as furniture, to visitors at the Expositions universelles as desirable commodities created demand for their purchase; others feared that the use of the fair or museum as medieval showroom provided the keys to the manufacture of forgeries.[42] The demand for copies of antiquities, however, was already in full force before the first of the Expositions was held in Paris. Some of these were produced and sold openly as reproductions. Most famous of the jewelers working in this area was Alessandro Castellani with the collaboration of Michelangelo Caetani. From the time of his political exile from Italy, Castellani established a gallery on the Champs-Elysées where he sold both genuine artifacts and high quality archaeological copies he had designed.[43] In addition to establishing his scholarly credentials by presenting a lecture before the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in December, 1860, Castellani attended a number of prestigious salons where he marketed his wares most effectively. These fine specimens of archaeological jewelry became particularly desirable once Napoleon III purchased such items for the female members of the imperial circle.[44]

Other jewelers marketing authentic archaeological finds and copies, however, might be described as somewhat less clear in their intentions with customers, and the margin between restoration and forgery was very

---

[37] Elizabeth Emery/Laura Morowitz, From the living room to the museum and back again: the collection and display of medieval art in the fin de siècle, in: Journal of the History of Collections 16, 2 (2004) 285–309, at 296–297.

[38] Exposition universelle de 1900: Catalogue illustré officiel de l'exposition retrospective de l'art français des origines à 1800 (Paris 1900).

[39] Émile Molinier, Exposition rétrospective de l'art français au Trocadéro: le moyen âge, in: Gazette des Beaux-Arts 31, 2 (1889) 145–166, at 146–150.

[40] Benjamin Fillon, L'art romain et ses dégénérescences au Trocadéro, in: Exposition universelle de 1878. Les beaux-arts et les arts décoratifs 2 (Paris 1879) 102–125, at 120–123; Émile Molinier/Frantz Marcou, Exposition rétrospective de l'art français des origines à 1800 (Paris 1900) i–iii; 58–59.

[41] Casimir Barrière-Flavy, Les arts industriels des peuples barbares de la Gaule du Ve au VIIIe siècle 1 (Toulouse 1901). For a discussion of the application of modern vocabulary to describe the early Middle Ages, see: Bonnie Effros, A century of remembrance and amnesia in the excavation, display, and interpretation of early medieval burial artifacts, in: Erinnerungskultur im Bestattungsritual: Archäologisch-Historisches Forum, ed. Jörg Jarnut/Matthias Wemhoff (MittelalterStudien 3, Munich 2003) 75–96, at 89–90.

[42] Emery/Morowitz, Consuming the Past 77–82.

[43] Geoffrey C. Munn, Castellani and Giuliano: Revivalist Jewellers of the Nineteenth Century (New York 1984) 14–25.

[44] Stefanie Walker, Founders, family members and the firm, in: Castellani and Italian Archaeological Jewelry, ed. Susan Weber Soros/Stefanie Walker (New Haven 2004) 35–82, at 57–58.

thin.[45] For instance, jeweler's rouge was in some cases applied to newly-made pieces to make them look as if they had spent more than a millennium buried in a grave. Such painstaking methods could be explained as part of the jeweler's effort to achieve historical accuracy but could just as easily be employed to fool potential customers into thinking that they were purchasing the genuine artifact.[46] By the early twentieth century, privately sponsored exhibitions of antiquities, intended to lend an air of legitimacy to the artifacts they highlighted, dramatically increased the ease with which forged medieval jewels and weaponry could be foisted off as legitimate on unsuspecting purchasers.[47]

With growing awareness of the riches to be found through excavations – albeit mainly those focused on the classical period – archaeology did begin to make waves in literary circles in the latter part of the century. Writers like Gustave Flaubert and Théophile Gauthier were each inspired to write fictional works on the basis of ancient finds made in North Africa and Egypt.[48] They learned of these discoveries at least in part through their presence in the same social circles as those with active antiquarian interests. Both of these men, along with Alexandre Dumas, George Sand, Maxime du Camp, and many others, for instance, attended the literary salon of Hortense Cornu, a childhood friend of Napoleon III and the wife of the artist Sebastian Cornu; not only was she regularly in attendance at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, but she was intimately involved in the emperor's foundation of the Musée des antiquités nationales at his palace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and corresponded internationally with the archaeologists who were ultimately responsible for its organization.[49] Enthusiasm for the Middle Ages was manifested in the large number of authors who collected and lived with medieval *bibelots*, including Emile Zola, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Pierre Loti, Jean Moréas, and Anatole France.[50]

Although the salon organized by Madame Cornu does not appear to have inspired novels based on early medieval archaeology, interest in medieval drama was much in vogue in musical circles and should not be surprising in light of the contemporary impact of the operatic undertakings of Richard Wagner in France.[51] One French lyric drama that evoked the barbarity of Merovingian Gaul was entitled "Frédégonde"; it was not particularly successful and was performed only once at the Opéra Garnier on 14 December 1895 as part of a benefit event for soldiers in Madagascar and the poor of Paris.[52] Although no one other than Camille Saint-Saëns composed the second part of the score, critics panned the production for trying to cram too much into a single performance.[53] The five-act libretto, which was composed by Louis Gallet,[54] also faced disapproval for

---

45 Rudolf Distelberger, Alfred André 1839–1919, in: Western Decorative Arts, Part I: Medieval, Renaissance, and Historicizing Styles Including Metalwork, Enamels, and Ceramics (Washington, DC 1993) 282–287.

46 In the instance of Jules Wièse's copy of a gold disk brooch "decorated with filigree and set with cabochon emeralds, rubies and pearls", the piece was rendered close to an early medieval original with the conscious choice of high quality gold, distressing of the body of the brooch, and the application of jeweler's rouge. The presence of Wièse's engraved signature on the reverse along with the use of precious stones rather than the glass paste normally employed in early medieval equivalents suggest that this fine rendering was intended as a faithful copy rather than as a forgery. Munn, Castellani and Giuliano, 181, number 186; Diana Scarisbrick, Archaeological jewelry in the orbit of Castellani, in: Castellani and Italian Archaeological Jewelry, ed. Susan Weber Soros/Stefanie Walker (New Haven 2004) 316–331, at 321.

47 On the famous case of the Lombard fakes exhibited at the Burlington Fine Art Club's London show in 1930, see: Dafydd Kidd, The 'Lombard Treasure' 1930–1990, in: Jewellery Studies 4 (1990) 59–71. For early medieval forgeries that made their way to North America, see: Bonnie Effros, Art of the "Dark Ages": Showing Merovingian artefacts in American public and private collections, in: Journal of the History of Collections 17, 1 (2005) 85–113, at 102–106.

48 And, artists such as G.-A. Rochegrosse incorporated artifacts into their depictions of the ancient world. Laurent Houssais, Archéologie, littérature, illustration: Salammbô vu par G.-A. Rochegrosse, in: Histoire de l'art 33–34 (1996) 43–54.

49 Marcel Emerit, Madame Cornu et Napoléon III d'après les lettres de l'empereur et d'autres documents inédits (Paris 1937) 104–143.

50 Emery/Morowitz, Consuming the Past 61–62. Anatole France was the owner of at least a few archeological artifacts, including one attributed to the Merovingian period. Dietrich von Bothmer, Glories of the Past: Ancient Art from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection (New York 1990) 263–264, numbers 195–196.

51 Despite Wagner's anti-French stance, Marcel Proust, Charles Baudelaire, and the Symbolists were enamored of the composer's operatic innovations. Emery/Morowitz, Consuming the Past 92–96.

52 Frédégonde, Programme de l'Académie nationale de Musique, 14 décembre 1895 (Paris 1895). Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Paris, Carton 2238.

53 Henry Bauer, Premières représentations: Académie nationale de musique – Frédégonde, drame lyrique en cinq actes, in: Echo de Paris (20 décembre 1895).

54 Louis Gallet, Frédégonde, drame lyrique en cinq actes. Musique de E. Guiraud & C. Saint-Saëns (Paris 1895).

playing too loosely with historical events even as narrated by Augustin Thierry.[55] Needless to say, the dramatic opera, which centered on Brunhild's quest for revenge against Fredegund following the murder of her sister Galswinth,[56] stuck with prevailing conventions for period costume (Figure 8). One particularly well-informed critic remarked in Le matin the next day that, "The sets in their evocation of the landscapes of Gallo-Roman Paris will delight the archaeologists. In their contemplation of the stage design, they will forget that the ballerinas are wearing tutus and skirts that are not at all Merovingian. But the pleasure of the choreography will cause them to indulge this anachronism."[57]

Despite the dearth of accurate renderings of early medieval artifacts in nineteenth-century paintings where they might be expected from the theme of the works, artists like the symbolist painter Gustave Moreau incorporated them in more unusual settings. Moreau, for instance, was influenced by Frankish artifacts in his rendering of Salomé in a work called "The Apparition", which he showed at the 1876 Salon in Paris (Figure 9). His inspiration for this piece included photographs of the Alhambra, architectural remains from southern Italy, and decorative patterns from stylebooks such as Nicolas Xavier Willemin's "Monuments français inédits" and Owen Jones's "The Grammar of Ornament".[58] (Rarely included in these publications were drawings of early medieval ornaments or artifacts,[59] and of those that were published as Frankish, none were actually derived from Merovingian-period graves. For the most part these illustrations were drawn from material remains preserved in medieval churches or manuscript illuminations.[60]) In the case of Moreau, they then made their way into the artistic product, completely disconnected from their historical and archaeological context.

A decade later, Moreau's formulation of "The Unicorns" (1887–1888) revealed the impact of his regular visits to the Musée de Cluny to see among other things the high medieval "Lady and the Unicorn" tapestries. His sources for early medieval metalwork included in the painting were similar to those of "The Apparition", and some of the pieces have been identified as coming from the October, 1865, installment of Magasin pittoresque, which showed archaeological finds from Samson (Belgium) attributed to the Franks. [61] Moreau, who had never ventured outside Europe and rarely traveled beyond the borders of France as an adult, nonetheless derived great delight from Eastern decorative motifs and archaeological remains and freely used these inspirations in his work.[62] The fanciful inclusion in his artistic production of early medieval artifacts, just one additional genre of the exotic, appears to have been exceptional among his contemporaries.

Despite the accessibility of early medieval artifacts, late nineteenth-century artists working on Merovingian images appear to have consciously chosen to omit these details from their paintings. While stylebooks like that of Nicolas Xavier Willemin and drawings of archaeological finds in handbooks like Arcisse de Caumont's archaeological "Abécédaire" (1850) existed in abundance,[63] and fairly accurate handbooks for drawing prehistoric figures by painters as renowned as Eugène Grasset existed by late in the century (Figure 10),[64] most artists who chose to paint Merovingians did not prioritize the use of chronologically accurate props in their creations. Prevailing aesthetics among academic painters meant that the didactic and moral functions of art were preferred to individualism and realistic detail. Situating their subjects in assuming or generic backgrounds had the

---

[55] Auguste Goullet, Académie nationale de musique – Frédégonde, opéra en cinq actes, in: Le soleil (19 décembre 1895).

[56] Like Alma-Tadema's painting described above, this opera was based upon the premise popularized by Augustin Thierry that Fredegund was responsible for Galswinth's murder.

[57] Les décors par leur evocation des paysages du Paris gallo-romain, rejouiront les archéologues. Dans la contemplation de l'art du decoration, ils oublieront que les dames du ballet portent des tutus et des jupes bien peu mérovingiens. Mais l'agrément de la choréographie les rendra indulgents pour l'anachronisme. Frédégonde: Cinq actes de musique française à l'Opéra, in: Le matin (19 décembre 1895).

[58] Marie-Laure de Contenson, The Middle Ages as reinvented by Gustave Moreau, in: Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream (Chicago 1999) 21–31, at 21–24.

[59] Owen Jones's work, first published in 1856, included only medieval patterns from the ninth century onward. Owen Jones, The Grammar of Ornament: A Unique Collection of More than 2,350 Classic Patterns, new edition (Lewes 2001).

[60] Nicolas Xavier Willemin, Monuments français inédits pour servir à l'historie des arts depuis le VIe siècle jusqu'au commencement du XVIIe 1, ed. André Pottier (Paris 1839) 3–14, plates 4, 8, 19–22.

[61] Ruines du château de Samson (Belgique), in: Magasin pittoresque 33 (Octobre 1865) 323–326. De Contenson, The Middle Ages 24–27.

[62] Geneviève Lacambre, Gustave Moreau and exoticism, in: Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream (Chicago 1999) 14–20.

[63] Arcisse de Caumont, Abécédaire ou Rudiment d'archéologie: Architecture religieuse (Caen ^{4}1859) 53–74.

[64] Eugène Grasset, Costumes de guerre de l'âge du bronze et de l'ère gauloise: Cahiers d'enseignement illustrés (Paris no date) 15–16.

effect of rendering their subjects more timeless.[65] Tellingly, this middle route ultimately failed to satisfy either conservative critics who favored neoclassical heroic scenes or those of a radical bent ready to abandon historical painting altogether. Because this art was not just driven by aesthetic concerns, but was also affected by contemporary events like the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune, we might also argue that sustained interest in or sympathy for the subjects they painted from the early medieval period was somewhat beside the point. In the late nineteenth century, painters used these images to comment on current events and were thus not concerned with the accurate rendering of clothing, furniture, or armament.

If nineteenth-century artists did not incorporate archaeological remains in their paintings, and instead derived their images of the Merovingians from early medieval and modern historical sources, we may surmise that they were influenced to at least some extent by contemporary debate regarding the legacy of the Franks in Gaul. In the late nineteenth century, political upheaval brought these issues to the fore. French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war coupled with fears of German unification meant that public discussions of the level of late antique Germanic contributions to the creation of France as a nation had renewed emotional resonance and political relevance.[66] Among the artists who painted scenes from Merovingian history, the historian of choice was Augustin Thierry, a liberal historian who had a very negative view of the Germanic invasions. Writing from the 1820s to the 1840s, he framed his essays with language accessible to academics and non-academics alike.[67] Portraying the Frankish monarchy as the foreign occupier of France,[68] Thierry found great delight in highlighting the barbarity of the Merovingian dynasty as well as members of the Frankish nobility, since, after all, they were the oppressors of the original ancestors of French: the Gallo-Romans. Not only did this aspect of Thierry's historical work have great appeal among a general French audience, but so did his style. Composing his "Récits des temps mérovingiens" during the July monarchy, Thierry sought to apply primary sources such as Gregory of Tours's Histories to the creation of a 'universal' history of France. His approach was that of an eyewitness, and his writing resembled the work of a historical novelist far more than that of a historian. Thierry justified his interpretive freedom by suggesting that the dramatic presentation of events of the past would bring them closer to his readers.[69] His success may be measured by the observation that most nineteenth-century artists looked no further than Thierry's sensationalist narrative to help them select riveting scenes from the early Middle Ages.

In an effort to identify how strongly historical genre paintings of the Merovingian period were motivated by contemporary political developments, we will now turn back to the painters who composed works based upon events drawn for the most part from either Gregory of Tours or Augustin Thierry. Earlier in the nineteenth century, in works such as François-Édouard Cibot's "Scene from the Life of Fredegund" presented at the Salon in 1833, we should not be surprised that the setting is entirely anachronistic since few archaeological finds of the early medieval period had been published at this time outside of local scholarly societies (Figure 11). Instead, early Christian basilicas of Rome influenced the décor of the painting; inspiration for the design of the clothing came from architectural elements in medieval churches such as Notre-Dame and Saint-Denis depicted in Bernard de Montfaucon's "Monuments de la Monarchie française" (1729–1733).[70] This highly negative portrayal of Fredegund, which would form an important part of Laurens Alma-Tadema's oeuvre a generation later, depicted the Merovingian queen rubbing salt in the wounds of the dying Bishop Praetextatus, whose murder she had allegedly commissioned. Created during the July Monarchy, a period that saw the production of numerous works of national historical significance, this painting emphasized the cruelty and barbarity of Frankish rule. This scene would have likely been rejected as non-classical and too obscure by the Academy-dominated Salons of the Restoration just a few years earlier; now its promotion was symptomatic of Louis Philippe's liberal

[65] Bigot, Le salon de 1883, 20; Patricia Mainardi, Art and Politics of the End of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867 (New Haven 1987) 156–169.

[66] Bonnie Effros, Germanic invasions and the academic politics of national identity in late nineteenth century France, in: Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters, 19.–21. Jahrhundert/Uses and Abuses of the Middle Ages, 19th–21st Century/Usages et mésuages du Moyen Age du XIXe au XXIe siècle, ed. János Bak/Jörg Jarnut/Pierre Monnet/Bernd Schneidmüller (Mittelalter Studien 17, Munich 2009) in press.

[67] Pomian, Francs et gaulois 72–73.

[68] Augustin Thierry, Récits des temps mérovingiens, new edition (Paris 1880) 36–42.

[69] Gauchet, Les Lettres sur l'histoire de France 247–300.

[70] Bergot/Pessiot/Grandjean/Pougetoux, Musée des Beaux-Arts 136–137.

campaign of the 'juste milieu' which encouraged compromise between the Academy and more mainstream artists through his sponsorship of the Salons.[71] Paintings of the Merovingian period, just as historical accounts, were effective vehicles by which to warn of the abuses of rule by a hereditary monarchy.

During the Second Empire, historical painting other than that which promoted directly the interests of Napoleon III lacked sustained governmental support. After the events of 1870, however, the Third Republic saw a dramatic increase in the number of pieces dedicated to Merovingian themes.[72] In large part, this change represented a reaction to French defeat by the Prussians; historical paintings represented an important means by which to recall key events in France's past and thereby reassert French identity. Pre-eminent among the artists who emerged in the context of these developments was Jean-Paul Laurens, a collector of medieval artifacts, an avowed anti-clerical artist, and a strong supporter of the Republican cause.[73] In the first Salon held after France's crushing defeat by the Prussians, two of Laurens's historical paintings, both with corpses figuring prominently, attracted critical acclaim.[74] Although he was all but forgotten in the twentieth century due to the success of the Impressionists and other artists once looked down upon by the Salon juries, Laurens's rise through the ranks of officially sanctioned Third Republic painters was meteoric; his pieces were seen as having the depth that had been lacking in imperial-sponsored art of the Second Empire.[75] His most important compositions on Merovingian themes included his commission to paint a cycle in the Panthéon focused upon the death of Geneviève, a project that he worked on during the first half of the 1880s (Figure 12). This mural's realism in its portrayal of the saint's emaciated face and body, and the individualism of the members of the crowd,[76] contrasted with Laurens's evident lack of concern with architectural or archaeological accuracy. In this piece, he celebrated the saint's devoted following among the diverse population of Paris and glorified the last vestiges of the Gallo-Roman legacy.

Official sanction of his work meant that Jean-Paul Laurens was asked to provide illustrations for important reprints of the works of authors such as Victor Hugo. In the late 1870s, Hachette, the large Parisian publishing house, hired him to produce artwork for a new edition of Thierry's "Récits de temps mérovingiens". Even a generation after its appearance, this highly negative presentation of the deeds of the Franks appealed to a broad audience;[77] in the aftermath of great losses in the war, the text resonated strongly and attracted a new generation of readers. Thierry's criticism of Merovingian barbarity had personal appeal for Laurens, who submitted forty-two images for the press's consideration.[78] His apparent delight in depicting scenes highlighting the consequences of Merovingian cruelty reflected not only his revulsion for Germans but also his understanding of the corrupting influence of unfettered royal power. Yet, judging from Laurens's pen-and-ink drawings for Thierry's "Récits", it is evident that as much as he was eager to discredit the Merovingians, he did not choose to illustrate the most gruesome incidents described by the sensationalist historian.

Laurens's renderings tended to focus on the alleged barbarity of the Franks highlighted by Thierry. One such occasion was the bizarre announcement by Clothar, the last of the sons of Clovis, to his wife Ingund that he was also going to wed her sister Arnegund (Figure 13). The drawings showed the aftermath of violence, like the famous visit of Queen Fredegund to the Bishop Praetextatus, whom she was alleged to have ordered killed: as we have seen, the scenario had been painted already by Cibot and Alma-Tadema (Figure 14).[79] Laurens's view was not one-sided; as a Romantic painter, he also gave attention to more contemplative themes, such as in his intimate portrayal of the sixth-century captive Radegund rendered in pen-and-ink for Thierry's book as

[71] Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven 1986) 6–14.

[72] This brief return to historical painting also constituted a backlash against the neutral stance on art policies taken by Napoleon III in the 1860s. Patricia Mainardi, The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic (Cambridge 1993) 38–40; Mainardi, Art and Politics 38; 47–49.

[73] Michael Paul Driskel, Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France (University Park 1992) 51–53.

[74] Ferdinand Fabre, Le roman d'un peintre (Paris ^{2}1879) 1–7.

[75] Des Cars, Jean-Paul Laurens 23–28.

[76] Catalogue, in: Jean-Paul Laurens 1838–1921: Peintre d'histoire. Paris, Musée d'Orsay 6 October 1997–4 janvier 1998; Toulouse, Musée des Augustins 2 février–4 mai 1998 (Paris 1997) 75–196, at 131–132.

[77] Augustin Thierry, Considération sur l'histoire de France, in: Oeuvres d'Augustin Thierry, new edition (Paris 1868) 15–287, at 204.

[78] Vaisse, L'histoire 215–217.

[79] Catalogue, in: Jean-Paul Laurens 165–173.

well as in oil for a freestanding portrait (Figure 15). The saint, scarcely a child anymore, peered into the mirror with great terror, since she knew that her rapidly approaching maturity would make her the wife of the king against her will. As is true of virtually all of his renderings of the Merovingian epoch, Laurens's research on period architecture and clothing was Romantic and superficial. His main sources for the Merovingian period were probably limited to introductory manuals such as Arcisse de Caumont's "Abécédaire". Many of the individuals portrayed had anachronistic features such as stirrups absent from the archaeological record for this period (Figure 16).[80] The underlying message conveyed by Laurens's paintings occupied a higher priority than the accuracy of the props and costumes used to clothe his subjects.

With the eclipse of the official Salon in 1883, it is appropriate to end this discussion with Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, whose oeuvre is more difficult to link to a particular artistic faction. Although his dream-like paintings and two-dimensional approach attracted much negative commentary from critics early in his career due to the aesthetics of his style, the popular success of his murals commissioned for public spaces from the 1870s onward meant that he became one of the most beloved artists in France.[81] His work consciously evoked the work of the French *primitifs*, who were praised by many nineteenth-century connoisseurs as self-trained, pious, and authentic craftsmen who embodied the superior achievements of medieval France.[82] Expressing views that were far to the right of Laurens's Republican sentiments, Puvis was a nationalist and used classicizing imagery to encourage the brand of patriotism promoted by historians like Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War.[83] Like Maurice Denis, who in 1895 decorated the home of Denys Cochin with a ceiling painting, seven panels, and a stained glass window depicting scenes from the life of the seventh-century Saint Hubert, Puvis de Chavannes saw in the early Middle Ages great opportunities for nostalgic portrayals of piety and purity.[84]

Not surprisingly, Puvis de Chavannes found in the Merovingian period ammunition for the expression of national pride and identity. Asked to compose two decorative panels for the new town hall in Poitiers in July, 1870, Puvis's progress was interrupted by the war and the Commune, and he did not complete the murals until 1876. Although these events probably did not determine the logical choice of themes for these pieces, they certainly played into the patriotic allegory contained in Puvis's post-war compositions.[85] One panel depicted Charles Martel's triumph over would-be Muslim conquerors and his successful defense of Christianity; it emphasized the mayor of the palace's protection of clerics, a symbolic touchstone when struggles between the Republic and the Catholic Church had become paramount. A second work for the town hall portrayed Radegund's convent in Poitiers as a haven for poets in an age of barbarism (Figure 17). Puvis showed Radegund fostering the arts and sponsoring artists in a time of great upheaval, a situation he viewed as little different from his own experience of seeing France under attack by both the Prussians and the Communards. Puvis made such parallels between his own lifetime and the sixth century explicit by including not only Venantius Fortunatus in the work, but by inserting his own resemblance and that of his recently deceased friend Théophile Gauthier as the two figures just behind the poet.[86]

More well known were Puvis's commissions of the life of Geneviève for the Panthéon, which were offered to him in two intervals over a span of two decades. Completed in 1877, Puvis's characterization of the education of the saint highlighted her spirituality, dignity, and strength. In his later murals, he focused on Geneviève's controversial role in the provisioning of Paris during Hunnic attacks. His moving portrayal of

[80] Catalogue, in: Jean-Paul Laurens 166–172.

[81] Jennifer L. Shaw, Dream States: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France (New Haven 2002) 2–11.

[82] Laura Morowitz, Medievalism, classicism, and nationalism: The appropriation of the French primitifs in turn-of-the-century France, in: Nationalism and French Visual Culture, 1870–1914, ed. June Hargrove/Neil McWilliam (Studies in the History of Art 68, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts Symposium Papers 45, Washington, DC 2005) 225–241.

[83] Aimée Brown Price, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes: The development of a pictorial idiom, in: Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (Amsterdam 1994) 11–27, at 13–18.

[84] Laura Morowitz, Anti-Semitism, medievalism and the art of the Fin-de-Siècle, in: Oxford Art Journal 20, 1 (1997) 35–49, at 44–46.

[85] Clayson makes particular reference to Puvis de Chavannes' poignant works executed during the Prussian siege of Paris: "Le Ballon" (1870) and "Le pigeon voyageur" (1871). Hollis Clayson, Paris in Despair: Art and Everyday Life under Siege (1870–71) (Chicago 2002) 145–162.

[86] The features of Marie Cantacuzène, whom Puvis married a year before his death, were used in his depiction of Radegund. Brian Petrie, Puvis de Chavannes, ed. Simon Lee (Aldershot 1997) 90–93; 144–145.

Geneviève's vigil over Paris was completed in 1898, the year of his death. In this timeless and elegaic composition, reminiscent in its embrace of the city of the two most famous works he had created during the dark days of the siege of Paris,[87] the lack of specific reference to the fifth century allowed the artist to universalize his message. The watchful eye of the Gallo-Roman saint, whose face was actually a tribute to Puvis's wife Marie Cantacuzène,[88] embodied Puvis's vision for the future of France in which the nation would prosper in peace without interference by internal or external enemies.

In concluding, it appears that nineteenth-century artists' motives for painting the Merovingians had far more to do with the historical circumstances in which these works were executed than a desire to represent their early medieval subjects accurately. As an ambivalent part of France's distant past, which was thrust into the present by the Franco-Prussian war, the Franks came to symbolize many things for those who claimed them in their compositions. The interest of most French painters was not historical or archaeological but political, regardless of whether they worked during the July monarchy or the Third Republic. Depending upon the historical narratives of Gregory of Tours and Augustin Thierry, these artists linked the Merovingians to a bankrupt and barbarous regime that symbolized the dangers of revived dynastic ambitions in France. Especially in the shadow of the Franco-Prussian war, it was difficult not to identify the Franks with the invading German forces that threatened French autonomy. Some painters with a more spiritual outlook nonetheless allowed their brushes to paint a more positive image of thriving oases of Catholic religiosity in the midst of a bleak and unsettled time. What cannot be disputed, however, is the virtual isolation of these artists in almost all cases from the scientific and archaeological debates of their day. Rather than drawing from authentic models, they applied generic Romantic motifs to their imaginative visions of the Merovingian past. The virtually unlimited choice of scenes denigrating the Frankish royalty and aristocracy provided by Gregory of Tours and Thierry had the practical consequence of allowing them to exclude any compositional details that might distract from the underlying message of their paintings.

[87] I thank Ian Wood for pointing out the similarities between this painting and "Le Ballon" and "Le pigeon voyageur". See note 84 above along with Wood's article on the Panthéon in this volume.

[88] Petrie, Puvis de Chavannes 93–96; 155–160.

Fig. 1: Laurens Alma-Tadema, *Education of the Children of Clovis.* Reproduced from half-tone blocks in: Percy Cross Standing, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (London: Cassell and Company, Limited, 1905), unnumbered plate opposite page 20.

Fig. 2: Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), *Battle of Tolbiac*, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France. Reproduced with permission of Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 3: Laurens Alma-Tadema, *Fredegonda at the Death-Bed of Praetextatus.* Reproduced from half-tone blocks in: Standing, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema*, unnumbered plate opposite page 26.

Fig. 4: Évariste-Vital Luminais, *The Énervés de Jumièges*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen, France. Reproduced with permission of Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 5: Albert Maignan, *Homage to Clovis II*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen, France. Reproduced with permission of Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

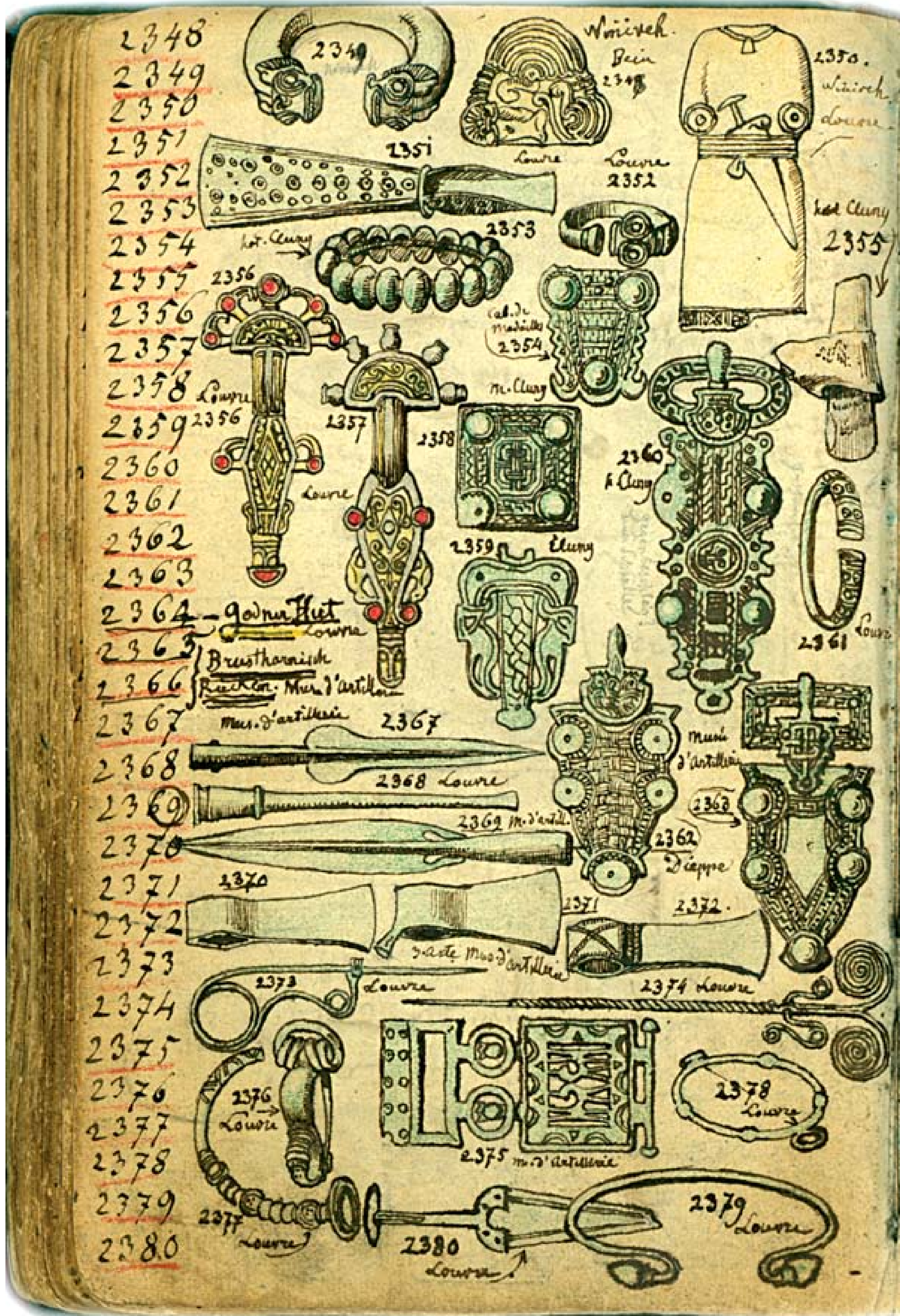

Fig. 6: Sketches of archaeological objects displayed in Parisian museums drawn by Ludwig Lindenschmit, director of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz, Germany, who visited France in the 1860s. Photograph taken from Lindenschmit’s sketch-book and reproduced with permission of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz.

Fig. 7: The archaeologist and collector Frédéric Moreau (d.1898) who bequeathed his archaeological collection, the fruit of more than twenty years of excavations, to the Musée des antiquités nationales. Photograph reproduced with permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

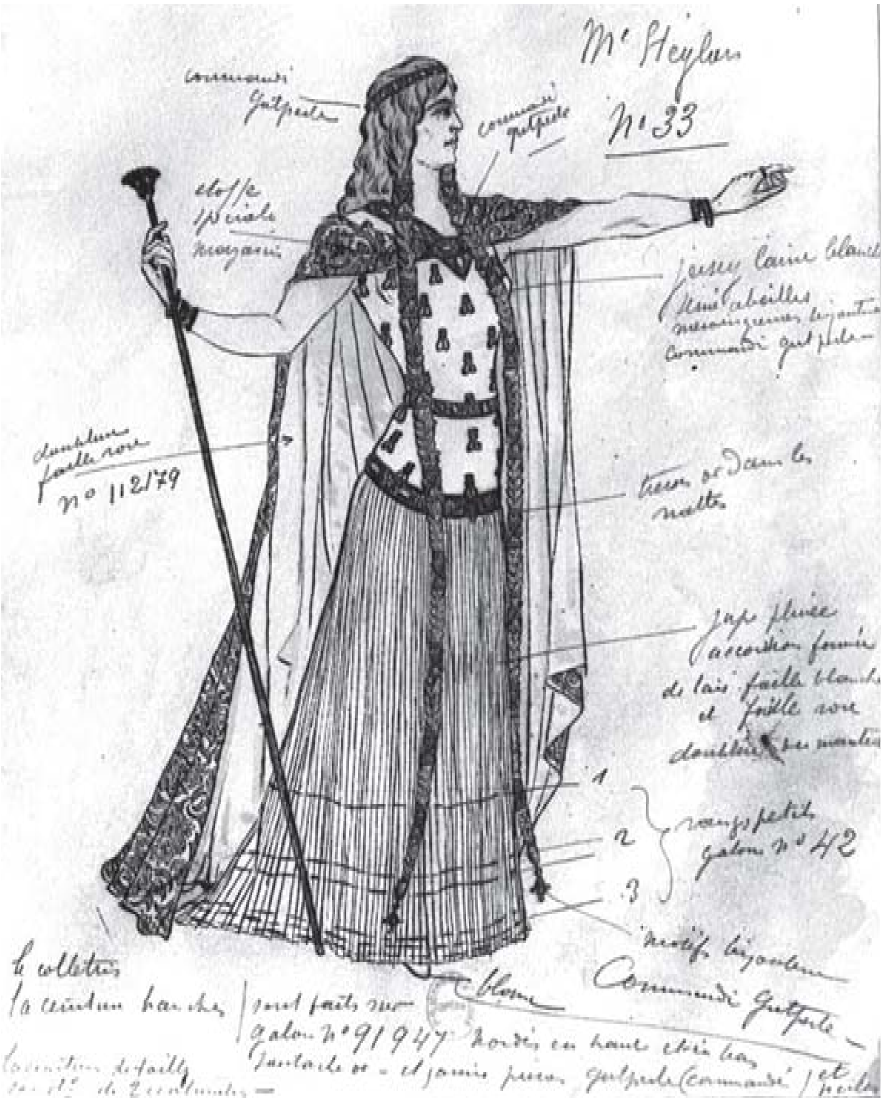

Fig. 8: Costume design for the character of Fredegund in the opera "Frédégonde" performed on 15 December 1895. Note the use of the decoration of bees, which were believed in the nineteenth century to have been Merovingian royal insignia due to their discovery in the grave of Childeric (d.480/1). Quarante maquettes de costumes par Charles Bianchini. Plume ou crayon, aquarelle. Non signées, s.d., D.216 (50a, 83. Reproduced here by permission of the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Fig. 9: Gustave Moreau, *The Apparition*, Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris, France. Reproduced with permission of Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 10: Drawing of a fifth-century Frankish warrior armed with an *angon* (throwing spear), *francisca* (throwing axe), and *spatha* (sword) hanging from a shoulder-belt modeled on archaeological finds. Grasset, *Costumes de guerre* 16.

Fig. 11: Edouard Cibot, *Un trait de la vie de Frédégonde*, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts, depot de l'État, 1835. Reproduced with permission of the Musées de la Ville de Rouen. Photographie Catherine Lancien, Carole Loisel.

Fig. 12: Jean-Paul Laurens, *The Death of St. Genevieve* (sketch), ca. 1877–1880, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Reproduced with permission of Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 13: "J'ai cherché pour ta soeur un homme riche et sage, et n'ai rien trouvé de mieux que moi-même." Augustin Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1887), fig.1. Reproduced with permission of the Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Fig. 14: "La viellard, dont tous les soupçons étaient confirmés par cette visite même, se souleva sur son lit de douleur." Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, fig. 22. Reproduced with permission of the Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Fig. 15: "Elle vit approcher avec terreur l'age nubile et le moment d'appartenir comme femme au roi dont elle était la captive." Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, fig. 27. Reproduced with permission of the Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Fig. 16: "C'étaient de ces figures estranges qui avaient parcouru la Gaule du temps d'Atilla et de Chlodowig." Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, fig. 10. Reproduced with permission of the Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Fig. 17: Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Venantius Fortunatus with Radegund and Agnes*, Hôtel de Ville, Poitiers. Photograph taken by and reproduced with permission of Cécile Treffort.