The innovative designs implemented at the Fondation Eugène Napoléon in Paris testify to efforts to improve the status of women through increased education and political autonomy during France’s Second Empire (1852–70; Figure 1). As the product of a tense relationship between the architect Jakob Ignaz Hittorff (1792–1867) and the patron Empress Eugénie (1826–1920), the wife of Napoléon III, the Fondation demonstrates the complex intersections of individual agency, cultural policy, and artistic production during a period better known for its nonconformist and antiestablishment vanguard. Eugénie’s patronage of the Fondation served both national and political ideologies and was instrumental in the formation of an imperial identity.

As patron and collaborator, Empress Eugénie challenged and ultimately inspired Hittorff to unparalleled innovations in design. His final design resulted from a near-crisis following Eugénie’s dismissal of several time-consuming project proposals and presentation drawings. The resulting building successfully defined a politicized venue in which Eugénie, through a process of individuation that characterized the early years of her reign, established her authority as empress and set out to distinguish her position from that of her husband. Eugénie’s involvement in the creation and management of the Fondation exemplifies her efforts to establish an autonomous position: a status beyond that of consort, within the confines of Salic law that restricted female leadership and independence.

Hittorff’s executed scheme was an unusual manifestation of femininity: it resembled a two-tiered pendant necklace. The plan was both celebrated and ridiculed by contemporary critics and fellow architects. Detractors disparaged the design as the “House of the Necklace,” marginalizing the agency of a female patron and criticizing the design as inspired by insignificant, feminine adornment.

Despite the building’s status as a national historical monument, it is currently in a perilous state of neglect, which reflects the ongoing disregard for the Fondation, particularly the chapel that was the nexus of Empress Eugénie’s commission. Scholars including Karl Hammer, Michael Kleine, and Donald Schneider have documented Hittorff’s career but offered little analysis of the Fondation. While the archival sources for Hittorff are extensive, documents detailing the role of the municipal government in the creation of the Fondation do not survive in the city archives; this material was undoubtedly destroyed during the tumultuous years of the Franco-Prussian war and Commune (1870–71). This paper considers extant architectural drawings and documents from Hittorff’s records and a preparatory study for the interior decoration of the Fondation’s chapel that have never before been examined. It also investigates the position of Empress Eugénie, whose role as a patron has been eclipsed from previous studies.1

The Fondation’s two-story structure has a dynamic design. The expressive façade of the principal entrance is bilaterally symmetrical, receding toward a central pavilion...
with a side porte cochère (carriage entrance). The main entrance originally led to the vestibule and then directly to the Salon de l’impératrice (Salon of the Empress), the large reception room intended for imperial visits (Figure 2). Hittorff planned the layout with Eugénie’s presence in mind, as the Salon de l’impératrice served as the center of the administrative wing, above which Hittorff placed the infirmary, pharmacy, and laboratory. The gallery wings diverge from the Salon de l’impératrice and intersect at a crossing gallery that links to the chapel (Figure 3). Classrooms were designed on the ground floor to the left of the administrative wing, and rooms for professional training were located to the right. Dormitories lined the top level of the four side galleries. The front façade, chapel, and administrative spaces were built of dressed stone; the rest of the building was of brick. Under direct sunlight, cream, yellow, gray-blue, deep red, and rose still glister across the brick walls, highlighting the polychrome architecture for which Hittorff was famed.

The origins of the Fondation began auspiciously when Eugénie received a credit of six hundred thousand francs from the city of Paris to purchase jewelry in celebration of her engagement to Napoléon III. The specifics of the gift remain unclear; it was intended for the purchase of une parure. Although most contemporary writers interpreted the gift as a diamond necklace, the municipal committee likely expected their gift to take the traditional form of a parure: a matching set of multicolored precious jewels, including a necklace, earrings, and perhaps a diadem. After committee members voted in favor of the gift on 26 January 1853, Eugénie indicated her intention to use the money for a higher purpose and outlined her plan in a letter to Jean-Jacques Berger, prefect of the Seine:

I am touched to learn of the generous decision of the Municipal Council of Paris that declares its support of the union in which the emperor is engaging. I feel, nonetheless, troubled thinking that the first public act connected with my name, at the time of my marriage, would be a considerable expense for the city of Paris. Allow me then not to accept your gift, as flattering as it is for me; you would make me more happy by using the money you have set for the purchase of jewels, which the Municipal Council wishes to offer me, towards a charity. I do not want my marriage to be a time when new costs are charged to the nation to which I belong, and the only thing I hope for is to share with the emperor the love and respect of the French people.

Eugénie elected to use the city’s monetary gift to establish a boarding school for impoverished French girls. With the balance of grace and decisiveness that would become her trademark, Eugénie quickly took control of the project, a position she assiduously maintained well past the building’s completion nearly four years later.

Eugénie’s patronage of what became known as the Fondation Eugène Napoléon, named after her son, was the first of her numerous proactive attempts to alleviate poverty
Eugénie’s endeavors included heading the Sociétés de charité maternelle (from February 1853), the Salles d’asile (May 1854), and the Hospice impérial des Quinze-Vingts (June 1854). She also founded the Société du Prince-Impérial de l’enfance au travail (May 1862) and the Société centrale de sauvetage des naufragés (April 1865). These charitable actions aligned Eugénie with pious queens such as Marie de’Medici, who commissioned numerous buildings for the Carmelites and Discalced Augustinians, and Anne of Austria, who supported the Benedictine order and erected the convent Val-de-Grâce. But Eugénie’s use of technological innovations and her emphasis on female empowerment through multidisciplinary education and professional training distinguish the Fondation and her position within this lineage.

Eugénie chose to establish herself as patron of a new type of public institution. This crucial decision positioned her as a leader within the larger context of the construction of reformist establishments—including schools, prisons, and hospitals—carried out by the French government following the Revolution of 1848. As such, Eugénie was a pioneer, and other government-funded institutions followed the example of her Fondation. These included the Asile impérial at Vincennes, a convalescent home for men completed in 1857, and the Asile impérial at Vesinet, a comparable institution for women initiated by the empress and completed in 1859.5
When the Fondation opened in 1857, it offered a home to three hundred girls, mostly orphans, and tended to their physical, spiritual, and educational needs. While the original terms of the institution did not state explicitly that the girls had to be Catholic, Catholicism was practiced exclusively at the Fondation and the religious background of an applicant's parents was considered. Daily activities included educational, religious, and professional instruction. Four large classrooms, one for each of the divisions into which the girls were placed according to their level of education, offered the venues for a curriculum focused on religion, reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. This progressive regimen promoted literacy in an era when only an estimated 45 percent of the female French population could both read and write. The Fondation also offered two work spaces for professional training in sewing and embroidery to prepare the girls to live independently after they left the Fondation at the age of twenty-one. Eugénie oversaw every aspect of the girls’ education, even approving the chef’s menus, the type of activities, and amount of physical education each day. The empress took great pains to guarantee that the girls received a daily balance of academic enrichment, professional training, religious practice, and physical activity.

**Hittorff and the Sisters of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul**

When Eugénie selected Hittorff to design the new Fondation, he was an established architect with a significant reputation in France and one of the central figures in Napoléon III’s reconstruction of Paris and restoration of national monuments across the country. In the early years of the Second Empire, the emperor relied on Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, appointed prefect of the Seine in June 1853, Prosper Mérimée, inspector of Public Monuments from 1834 to 1860—a longtime family friend of Eugénie and arguably her closest advisor on architectural matters—and architects Jean-Baptiste Lassus, Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Hector Lefuel, and Louis Visconti. Within this network of imperial patronage, Hittorff was recognized for his designs and management of secular and religious building projects in Paris. Born in Cologne, he moved to France in 1810, at the age of eighteen, and entered the Parisian École des Beaux-Arts a year later. It was only following his death and the Franco-Prussian War that Hittorff’s Germanic roots and numerous imperial projects positioned him as an outsider.

Hittorff’s career centered on the architectural transformation of Paris, and by 1853, he had significantly altered the urban planning of the Place de la Concorde and the adjoining promenade, the Champs Elysées (1829–54). During the Second Republic and Louis-Napoléon’s term as prince-president, Hittorff also constructed the Cirque Napoléon (or Cirque d’Hiver, 1851–52), a polychrome structure with an iron roof, and began designing the façades of town houses around Place de l’Etoile (1853). Most important, Hittorff’s architectural projects included the eclectic revival-style Church of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in Paris’s seventh arrondissement. In 1831, Hittorff succeeded his father-in-law Jean-Baptiste Lepère as the church’s principal architect, bringing the church to completion in 1844.

Through this work, Hittorff met the Sisters of the Charity of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. Saint Vincent de Paul, patron saint of charitable societies, founded the order in 1634 in collaboration with Saint Louise de Marillac. The sisters established the Hôpital des enfants-trouvés in 1670, a hospital to aid ailing children who were found, often abandoned, in Paris and the surrounding regions. Because of the order’s two-hundred-year tradition of helping children in need, in 1853 Eugénie selected the Sisters of the Charity of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul as the spiritual guides of her Fondation. Hittorff had completed the Church of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul less than a decade earlier; his experience and profile matched best with the empress’s plans for the new institution.

To date, an understanding of Hittorff’s role has been incorrectly interpreted through modernist notions of the primacy of the architect-creator in the formation of a building project. Eugénie charged Hittorff to locate appropriate property and draft presentation drawings. She hired him as chief designer and project manager, and Hittorff was responsible for administering the budget and for hiring all manufacturers and artists involved. Eugénie did not, however, grant Hittorff independence. She exercised control over all aspects of the Fondation, which was ultimately the product of a difficult patron-architect dialogue.

**Site Selection**

Although the city’s gift could fund a small public institution, Eugénie wanted her Fondation to aid a large number of girls. With a limited budget of six hundred thousand francs and the need to accommodate sixty girls and their spiritual guides, Hittorff’s first concern was choosing property on which to build, and he sought a location where he could economize using elements from an existing building. Beginning the first week of May 1853, Hittorff pursued his initial project, an economical renovation of a house in Paris at 39 rue d’Enfer. Despite evidence that Napoléon III approved of this first project, Eugénie wanted the number of girls increased to three hundred and, with thirty sis-
ters and other attendants, the numbers grew beyond the capacity of the rue d’Enfer site.12

Hittorff proceeded to search for other possible sites. By 20 September 1853, he proposed positioning the Fondation either in a remote location on a field in Passy, just beyond the outskirts of the Bois de Boulogne, or in the city on the Boulevard du Montparnasse adjoining the Hôpital des enfants-malades (Figures 4 and 5).13 Hittorff favored Passy where the site offered an expansive open-air setting and pleasant view. He thought Eugénie would appreciate the convenience of Passy, which was a short detour from the imperial couple’s principal route between Paris and the Palais de Saint-Cloud.14

Presumably for symbolic reasons and ready access from her political base at the Palais des Tuileries, Eugénie directed Hittorff to find land in Paris, preferably in the immediate vicinity of Les Invalides, the structure Louis XIV had built for soldiers disabled in his service.15 As a project manager preoccupied with practical matters, Hittorff was concerned with the cost of land at both locations. His preliminary budgets outlined the implausibility of funding the project solely from the city’s gift at either site. The cost of land on Boulevard du
Montparnasse was more than triple that at Passy. Hittorff proposed the most effective cost-cutting measure: reduce the number of girls the Fondation would accommodate.

Eugénie disregarded Hittorff’s suggestion, accepted neither of his plans, and obtained state property in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Hittorff struggled with the site, a former hay market later turned into a grain storage depot, and labored to create a plan. “I’m not very hopeful, yet not entirely desperate,” he confided in a private memorandum. Hittorff hoped Eugénie would approve a site at Ile des Cygnes that suited him better, and on 17 October 1853, he submitted plans for three different sites: Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Ile des Cygnes, and the coal market on quai Mazas. Keeping his patron in mind, Hittorff finally conceded that Faubourg Saint-Antoine was particularly well situated due to its easy accessibility from the imperial palaces at the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud.

Although this location placed the Fondation far from Les Invalides and beyond the core of the city, Eugénie approved of the site at Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Second Empire political strategies resonate in the location of the Fondation in Faubourg Saint-Antoine, an area that had been a center of proletariat resistance during the Revolution of 1848. Evidence suggests the site was selected primarily for its cost-effective, readily available land. Nevertheless, with its mission of aiding impoverished girls, the Fondation was also an attractive means of proclaiming social concerns as key to Second Empire policy in a sector of Paris that had resisted authoritarian rule. In March 1854, within six months of choosing the Fondation site, the empress founded a children’s hospital, the Hôpital Sainte-Eugénie, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The facility already existed; it was known as Hôpital Sainte-Marguerite and cared for adults, but it had been founded by Queen Marie-Thérèse as the Hospice des enfants-trouvés, a foundling residence, at the end of the seventeenth century.

Eugénie’s intervention affiliated her with a significant public work of a queen while reinforcing the imperial presence in Faubourg Saint-Antoine. By 1860, Hôpital Sainte-Eugénie maintained 405 beds and had already treated over three thousand children. This area of Paris was the center for children’s health facilities throughout the Second Empire.

Agreeing to the site in Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Eugénie had a clear sense of the centrality of religious practice in the Fondation’s mission that informed the changes she required in the ground plan, particularly of the chapel. In drawings dated November 1853, Hittorff revised his plans for a chapel based on a centralized plan, covered with a cupola, that extended into covered passageways connecting the chapel and side arms of the building (Figure 6). For the altar, Hittorff placed a sculpture in a niche as the sole decoration. Clearly, he had not conceived of the chapel as a place where all of the Fondation’s inhabitants would gather for worship at the same time. Eugénie, however, deemed the chapel the most significant part of the Fondation and instructed Hittorff to redesign it following a basilican plan and to extend the arms of the second courtyard to accommodate a larger religious space.

Eugénie’s role as patron and Paris’s original gift of jewelry for the new empress then emerged foremost in Hittorff’s conception of the plan. By 1 December 1853, he was working on the executed scheme that involved demolishing the former hay market and incorporating its building materials into new foundations. Despite such economizing measures, Hittorff informed Haussmann that the building could not be completed for six hundred thousand francs.

In a letter dated 19 January 1854 accompanying the third set of plans sent to Haussmann, Hittorff asked to increase...
the usual 10 percent allowance for unforeseen expenses to 25 percent. He also outlined the potential added expenses of fixed furniture, a clock, and heating equipment, none of which had been considered in the initial budget. Three months later, Hittorff learned that the Civic Building Council had approved his plans, and he began assembling his team, taking some workmen from his still incomplete project at the Place de la Concorde.

The Necklace

Hittorff's creative design for the Fondation was based on a pendant necklace, forming what Haussmann later disparagingly referred to in his memoirs as the “Maison du Collier” (House of the Necklace). Hittorff maintained that Haussmann was never sympathetic to the institution, never deigned to visit the building site with the imperial couple, and regarded the imperial couple's wishes as simply a means of creating more work for his office. Working with a confined site located at the juncture of two streets, and with private houses flanking two sides of the property, Hittorff responded with a refined octagonal ground plan representing the structure of a tiered pendant necklace. This conception of the ground plan begins to appear in his preliminary drawings when Hittorff was forced to deal with the unusual borders of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine site. The difficult site conditions and creative urgency of feeling neither “hopeful” nor “desperate” encouraged him to work beyond the confines of contemporary architectural practice.

Inspiration came from the psychological emphasis Hittorff placed on his patron's importance as well as his own curiosity about jewelry. This interest led him to acquire a copy of Louvre curator Léon de Laborde’s book of 1853, Notices des émaux, bijoux et objets divers exposés dans les galeries du musée du Louvre (Accounts of the enamels, jewels, and diverse objects exhibited in the galleries of the Louvre Museum), and to pour over its contents; it was among the most well-worn books in his library. Hittorff was fascinated with antiquity and inspired by Laborde’s discussion of inscriptions, antique cameos, and particularly regal medieval interpretations of antique portrait cameos. He incorporated designs of a pent à col (pentacol, or petit à col), a pendant necklace elaborated with pearls and precious stones, into his plan for the Fondation.

The personal significance of Hittorff’s innovative architectural conception is captured by a drawing, the meaning of which has never before been recognized (Figure 7). Hittorff clearly produced the drawing for his personal consumption as it was unmarked by his signature, a date, or the usual stamp: Vu au Conseil Général des Bâtiments Civils Paris le[]. His presentation drawings had one or all of these signs of public circulation. The detailed execution of this drawing, which included hand coloring,
captures Hittorff’s excitement and commitment to the creativity of his idea and his sense of Eugénie’s importance for the conception of the structure.

Hittorff drew two flanking ovals in gold pencil and, inside the left oval, rendered the plan of the building in pencil and red ink exactly as it was realized. Inside the right oval, he emphasized the “necklace” design of the ground plan in pencil heightened with pink and green wash. Hittorff positioned the Salon de l’impératrice as the clasp, the chapel as the upper pendant, and the amenities as the lower pendant. Empress Eugénie’s profile fills a cameo as the lower pendant; depicted in profile she wears a crown and numerous jewels. Thus in this private drawing, Hittorff distilled imperial notions of a multifaceted parure into the architectural form of a two-tiered pendant necklace. He highlighted his patron’s femininity, both through the obvious reference to female adornment and his choice of coloration, pastel pink and green, then two of the favored colors of Eugénie’s toilette. This drawing successfully captured the centrality of the patronal relationship in Hittorff’s conception of the Fondation’s plan.

Metaphorically, Hittorff treated Eugénie as synonymous with the building and, inspired by his sense of the empress’s femininity, transformed the design into a dynamic structure. Previous studies of Hittorff’s work have assumed that he incorporated building materials from the hay market for its demolition at the inexplicable rate. Hittorff’s records make clear that nothing was conserved due to its poor condition. Contemporary observers were curious about the large building project, but few had access and could do little more than peer at the façade through the wrought iron grate. As a result, Hittorff’s innovative plan was mistakenly assumed to be a triangle; one author even published that inaccurate description in a leading architectural journal.

Imperial Patronage

Eugénie was a leading proponent of the social engineering at the core of Second Empire city planning and building projects, and Hittorff incorporated the latest technologies into the Fondation to promote its functionality, efficiency, and healthfulness. The main complex was centrally heated, fresh water was piped in from the Seine to the south, and sewers removed refuse downstream. Laundry facilities included a mechanical washing machine, and each girl enjoyed an individual washtub in the dormitory. Hittorff went to great lengths to install water filters on the main pipes and to use high-quality pipes requiring minimal maintenance.

In keeping with Eugénie’s promotion of urban green spaces during the Second Empire, including the elaborate Buttes de Chaumont (Chaumont hills) and numerous other parks in and around Paris, Hittorff designed four different garden settings within the confines of the Fondation’s high walls. He surrounded the entrance with an English garden, a popular style during the period represented in the Bois de Boulogne (1852–58) and Bois de Vincennes (after 1860), both large wooded parks outside Paris. The austere geometry of Hittorff’s neoclassical-style building thus contrasted with the natural designs of the gardens, including the sisters’ garden in the first courtyard, the recreation area in the second courtyard behind the chapel, and the kitchen garden at the back of the building. Every aspect of the elaborate infrastructure demonstrated the technological developments and the social concerns at the core of French policy in the 1850s and 1860s.

Generally, Eugénie was satisfied with the results, however, she required Hittorff to improve the heating of the chapel, which was not on par with the rest of the building. Eugénie made a visit specifically to follow up on the heating system and ventilation of the infirmary. The empress even took an interest in the bathroom sinks, advocating the installation of higher-quality enamel rather than zinc basins. Her regular visits and ensuing requests to improve aspects of the design were, in large part, why the building went far over budget. Ultimately the Fondation cost 1,607,000 francs to construct, nearly three times as much as the city originally allocated. The project was, however, supported by the imperial and city governments, undoubtedly due to both Eugénie’s involvement and the anticipated social impact of the Fondation.

Unpredictable delays played a part in the Fondation’s increased cost; it took over five years to execute the project. Hittorff’s management was frustrated from the start when over 5,300 bags of flour were removed from the original hay market building for its demolition at the inexplicable and unbearably slow rate of between 130 and 795 per day. Hittorff’s correspondence evinces his impressive patience with the minute yet consequential administrative tasks that dominated the life of the architect. He was also required to maintain a visible presence on the building site to advance construction. In addition, there were occasions when Eugénie’s beneficence exacerbated the situation. In 1856, her generous allocation of additional funds meant that Hittorff took a two-and-a-half-month leave and traveled to ancient sites in Italy and Greece. He returned to discover negligible advancement on numerous commitments including the manufacture of the organ, carpets, and heating system. A positive outcome of his absence was Hittorff’s audience with Pope Pius IX, who sent his blessing to the imperial family.
The Art Commissions

Hittorff underestimated the empress’s interest in the project, particularly regarding the art that would decorate the building and signify its social and personal meaning. Eugénie kept a close eye on the Fondation’s progress and regularly sent Hittorff word she felt construction should move more rapidly. In March 1855, Hittorff asked Haussmann for additional funds amounting to 62,500 francs to commission art works for two specific areas of the building. For the chapel he suggested three stone statues for the exterior and, for the interior, two plaster statues, twelve wood reliefs, and a hemicycle painting over the altar. For the administration wing he proposed three stone statues for the exterior and two marble sculptures for the mantle of the Salon de l’impératrice.7

Haussmann hesitated to commit to the additional budget despite Hittorff’s warning that construction would cease without confirmation of the art funds.8 Hittorff waited seven months, to October 1855, and then adopted a different approach.9 He sent Haussmann detailed descriptions of the aesthetics of each artwork proposed as well as individual costs and the name of the artist he planned to hire. Hittorff suggested Charles Seurre as the sculptor of Virgin Flanked by Angels, slated for the front façade, and Celestin Nanteuil as sculptor of the Three Theological Virtues for the chapel’s façade. For the chapel’s interior sculpture, he recommended hiring younger artists Gustave Crauk, then at the French Academy in Rome, and Emile Hébert, who recently had executed several works for the state. Hittorff suggested Aimé Millet for the wood sculptures of the stations, as he had just completed similar work for the Church of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. Hittorff’s most effusive recommendation focused on the hemicycle painting; to create this work he promoted Félix Barrias, who had recently completed the Chapel of Saint-Louis at Saint-Eustache.10 Hittorff needed the works executed quickly, and Hébert may have initially received commissions for both interior statues because Crauk was in Rome and not immediately available. Although the reasons are unclear, Hittorff ultimately hired Ferdinand Taluet instead of Hébert for the statues of Saint Charles Borromeo and Saint Vincent de Paul and selected Calmels for two further interior statues.11

In January 1856, Hittorff began planning for an impending visit by the imperial couple. However, when Haussmann arrived towards the end of the month, he was disappointed with the state of construction and delayed the official visit until 16 February.12 During her tour of the site, Eugénie disapproved of Calmels’s statues which, standing at 1.8 meters, depicted Saint Louis and Saint Eugénie. The Empress ordered that they represent Saint Napoléon and Bishop Saint Eugène, choices that emphasized Napoleonic lineage over French history and a powerful male religious figure over the female source of her name.13 Mistakenly, Hittorff had not submitted his choice of saints to the empress for her approval, and needing Calmels to execute two new statues immediately, he sought to placate the artist. Hittorff asked Haussmann if it would be possible to pay Calmels extra (he had already modeled the statues in clay) or find an alternate location for these two works.14 Hittorff’s error in judgment left its mark, and Eugénie required that all of the artists involved submit drawings for her to consider.15

Hittorff wrongly had believed that he could make his own decisions, but Eugénie had no such freedom in mind. At the time of this patron-architect conflict, Hittorff had only solicited Eugénie’s approval of his plans on one occasion since site selection. Eugénie now reasserted her intention of controlling all aspects of her commission. On 20 June 1855, Hittorff wrote to the empress’s secretary, Damas-Hinard, to ask that he consult Eugénie regarding two proposed inscriptions for the exterior of the building (see Figure 1). First, Hittorff suggested that the front façade be inscribed “Maison d’éducation de jeunes ouvrières/fondée en 1855/par S.M. l’Impératrice Eugénie.” The inclusion of 1855 indicates that Hittorff was overly optimistic about the date of completion. When the Fondation opened on 30 December 1856, the year of her son’s birth, Eugénie opted for “Maison Eugène Napoléon/fondée en 1856/par Sa Majesté l’Impératrice” (Eugène Napoléon House/founded in 1856/by Her Majesty the Empress). Second, Hittorff proposed an inscription for the chapel façade: “Sous la protection de la très Sainte Vierge/et l’invocation de Sainte Eugénie/Cette maison est consacrée à la glorification/de la Religion et du travail” (Under the protection of the Very Holy Virgin/and the invocation of Saint Eugénie/This house is consecrated for the glorification of religion and work). Today there is no inscription on the exterior of the chapel, and prints Hittorff commissioned when the building was completed show no text in this location.16 Beyond dedicatory inscriptions, however, Hittorff attempted to consult with Eugénie as little as possible.

Barrias’s Hemicyle and Eugénie’s Imperial Persona

From the beginning of the Second Empire, Napoléon III and Eugénie commissioned numerous artworks to disseminate their image in France and its colonies. Austrian-born and internationally recognized court artist Franz Xaver Winterhalter was their principal portrait painter, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux executed numerous sculptures, and dozens of other artists including Alexandre Cabanel, Fanny...
Dubois-d’Avessnes, Edouard Dubufe, Hippolyte Flandrin, and Mary-Louise Lefèvre-Deumier worked for the imperial couple during their reign. Despite this ambitious art program, Hittorff underestimated Eugénie’s interest in the symbolic resonance of the Fondation’s iconography and, in general, the agency she intended to achieve as its patron.

The role in which Eugénie envisioned herself was most clearly manifest in her emphasis on piety and benefaction in the chapel’s interior, a program developed from Nanteuil’s figure of *Charity*, flanked by *Faith* and *Hope*, that commanded the chapel’s façade (Figure 8). Eugénie was principally concerned with the largest decoration in the chapel, the hemicycle painted above the altar by Barrias in 1856 (Figure 9). This large-scale wall painting reinforces the purpose of the institution and depicts a carefully constructed image of Eugénie before the Virgin Mary.

Barrias’s working process and the iconographic program of the hemicycle indicate Eugénie’s efforts to control the portrayal of both herself and her donation. Barrias prepared a sketch for Eugénie and, even though the Fine Arts Commission had already approved Barrias’s proposal, Hittorff did not proceed until Eugénie reviewed the sketch. She examined it closely and made what Hittorff diplomatically described as “judicious observations” that resulted in important modifications. While Hittorff retained at least the appearance of patience with his patron, he was in fact anxious to receive official confirmation of Eugénie’s chosen date to consecrate the building. He was particularly concerned that the scaffolding required to paint above the high altar be removed well in advance of the opening ceremony. To enable Barrias to advance his plans quickly, Hittorff requested the painter be given access either to the empress’s wedding dress or a similar gown and he sought information about the style and color Eugénie had selected for the girls’ uniforms. Hittorff and Barrias both wanted Eugénie’s portrait and the overall composition to be truthful to the historic event of the donation. Eugénie attempted to bring this to fruition and set the date of consecration as 8 September 1856, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary; Hittorff then endeavored to have Barrias and organ manufacturer Cavaillé-Coll complete their respective projects in a timely fashion. From Damas-Hinard, Barrias received a letter of introduction to the Fondation’s future mother superior that enabled him to study the sisters’ habits. He also sought measurements of one of the girls to be transferred from an institution in Saint-Germain to the new foundation but then arranged for a doll dressed in the intended uniform. Hittorff suffered considerable distress when he temporarily lost the doll after presenting it for approval by the empress and city councilors.

In August, as Eugénie and the imperial family prepared for a vacation in Biarritz, Hittorff’s anxiety reached a heightened state. He requested contact information from Damas-Hinard in the event that any questions should arise. Hittorff sent Barrias’s final study for the hemicycle to Biarritz, along with a request to move the consecration date to 15 November 1856, the feast of Saint Eugénie. To fulfill the empress’s request for another sketch, Barrias com-
completed an unusual preparatory study painted on an apse-shaped piece of wood and framed by the architectural details planned for the focal point of the Fondation’s chapel (Figure 10). Likely with Hittorff’s guidance, Barrias designed this unusual study for *Empress Eugénie placing the Fondation Eugène Napoléon under the protection of the Virgin, Saint Catherine, and Saint Vincent de Paul* such that it could be placed on a table before their patron as a detailed presentation of the hemicycle’s composition and iconography.

Eugénie approved of the general composition but required Barrias to alter significant elements so that the symbolic pictorialization of her patronage would better convey the ideology she hoped to represent: that her donation was a pious act by a legitimate representative of a powerful new political regime. Barrias’s proposal combined historical accuracy, a realistic mode of representation, and symbols from the traditions of Byzantine and Renaissance religious painting. In the study, Eugénie appears prominently in the foreground of the composition, to the right of the altar and kneeling on a prayer stool. She raises a *maquette* (three-dimensional model) of the building before the Virgin Mary, who wears a red dress and blue mantle and sits on a throne holding Christ on her lap, supporting his arms outstretched in a manner that evokes the crucifixion. To their right, Saint Catherine of Alexandria gestures with her left hand to heaven and grasps the palm branch of a martyr in her right, while resting it on the spiked wheel on which she was killed. Next to the wheel lies the crown and a partially unrolled scroll she has cast aside. Saint Catherine looks down to Eugénie and her gaze, as well as the extension of her hand towards the Virgin Mary, connects the empress with the most significant Roman Catholic female figure. On the left of Mary, Saint Vincent de Paul holds a scroll in his right hand and rests his left hand on his chest; he looks out to the viewer standing in front of the chapel’s altar. Thus the patron saint of education and the patron saint of the order of nuns who were to run the Fondation flank the Virgin and Christ, and all four are presented in the realm of heaven. Barrias’s conception of the upper third of the composition met with Eugénie’s approval and thus was scaled up and transferred to the wall without alteration (Figure 11). Eugénie also approved of the decorative elements he planned for the lower third, including a tassel-trimmed border of gold foliage with alternating encircled Greek crosses, roses, and lilies in oval frames; a neutral pattern of gold squares and foliage on a red ground dominates the remainder of the lower section.
Figure 10 Barrias, preparatory study of Empress Eugénie placing the Foundation Eugène Napoléon under the protection of the Virgin, Saint Catherine, and Saint Vincent de Paul, 1856

Figure 11 Barrias, preparatory drawing of Saint Vincent de Paul, 1856, scaled for transfer
Within this fictionalized rendering of heavenly and earthly realms, Barrias remained dedicated to the principles of realism in his details and went to great lengths, through Hittorff, to portray the uniform Eugénie planned for the girls. In the study, he depicted them in green smocks with red ribbon at their necks extending to pendants; but in the final version, they wear the more formal, institutionally legislated grey uniforms, presumably emulating the elusive clothed doll. To present the habit of the Sisters of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul as accurately as possible, Barrias invoked the help of female sitters including Hittorff’s wife, whose features figure prominently as the first sister to the left of the altar (Figure 12).

Following established conventions, Barrias divided the composition symmetrically and placed to the Virgin Mary’s left the girls who hoped to be “saved” by acceptance into the care of the Fondation. The girls already “redeemed” Barrias posed to the Virgin’s right, and the composition of this section is dominated by ordered lines and controlled actions, the same behavior promoted by the school. Some conversation takes place between the girls, but in the principal section, they are portrayed as pious and acquiescent. They clasp their hands together in prayer or cross their arms in front of their chests in supplication. One girl, third from the left, looks off into the distance in a state of spiritual detachment. Barrias implies that, thanks to Eugénie’s patronage of the Fondation, these girls have found their path in life. Two indicate their gratitude and present a bouquet of roses to Eugénie in the foreground, while other roses and petals are strewn decoratively on the red-and-green-striped carpet. In the expectant group behind Eugénie, three women accompany four girls, and one woman kneels to kiss the hem of Eugénie’s dress as nuns and benefactors look on from behind. Eugénie approved of aspects of the middle third of the composition, specifically the two groups of young girls, sisters, and male figures flanking her, although Barrias had to increase the number of figures, particularly to the left of the altar, to imply an even greater success for the institution.

Eugénie was not satisfied, however, with how she was portrayed, and Barrias thus amended those elements accordingly. In the study, as in the final painting, Eugénie wears her wedding dress and makes an offering to the Virgin Mary. Recall that Barrias planned to depict Eugénie kneeling on a prayer stool and raising in her hands a maquette of the Fondation as a symbolic materialization of her patronage (see Figure 10). Draped with a two-tiered pendant necklace, the maquette refers to the original intention of the city’s gift. Eugénie approved of the compositional significance of the maquette but not its centrality, nor its immediate physical connection to her. Hence, in the final painting, an enlarged maquette is placed in the middle of the altar, the necklace is omitted, and Eugénie appears in obeisance with both arms outstretched, holding a finely detailed rosary in her left hand.55 The painted altar mirrors the actual altar below, and the thrice-repeated symbol across the front denotes Christ’s presence.

The alterations Eugénie requested de-emphasize her position as patron of the building in favor of greater importance on her piety and modesty, as well as the significance of her religious beliefs in the formation of the institution. Indeed, by positioning Eugénie on the Virgin’s left, Barrias...
indicates that her patronage of the Fondation will also bring about her religious salvation. As the Virgin Mary presents her gift to the world, a son destined for crucifixion, Barrias suggests that the empress’s benevolent act helps bring her closer to the purity and goodness of Mary. Eugénie’s gift can, therefore, be interpreted as an offering in remembrance of God’s gift to the world through Mary. Two inscriptions above the apse also invoke Mary’s significance for the Fondation. One reads, “O Marie conçue sans peche priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous” (Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who appeal to you) and the other, “SIT NOMEN DOMINI BENEDICTUM EX HOC NUNC ET USQUE IN SECULUM” (Let the name of the Lord be praised from this time now and always into posterity).56

Emblems of Eugénie’s political power remain and are in fact strengthened in the final work. The prayer stool that created a visual barrier to the altar in the study was removed in the final painting and Eugénie kneels on a blue cushion trimmed with gold edging and tassels. The colors signify her imperial status as empress, as does the material of the cushion, a pattern of gold bees, each element reinforcing the imperial origins of the chapel’s sacred space.

Eugénie sought historical accuracy and, although she had been empress for three years by the time Barrias painted the study and apse, she remained concerned that the details of her dress accurately convey the moment of her marriage at Nôtre-Dame Cathedral on 30 January 1853. In the study, Barrias rendered Eugénie’s wedding dress as a layered gown with three-quarter-length sleeves and her headdress a combined tiara and veil extending from a bun at the nape of her neck. In the final painting, he made the dress more voluminous and transformed her headdress into a larger diadem with the veil flowing from its center. Barrias’s portrayal thus came much closer to the details of Gustave Le Gray’s famous series of photographs of Eugénie taken at Saint-Cloud at the time of the prince imperial’s baptism in 1856, one of which may, indeed, have been a source for Barrias’s final details (Figure 13).

Most important, Eugénie’s Spanish heritage and the prominent position she desired for herself as the inheritor of a tradition of female benefaction is clearly represented by the Order of Maria Luisa, a medal bestowed by the queen of Spain in recognition of community service undertaken by women.57 This order was founded in 1792 by King Charles IV in honor of his wife Maria Luisa, and besides the queen and princesses of the Spanish royal family, a maximum of thirty women could hold the order at any one time. Eugénie received the medal from Queen Isabella at the time of her marriage and wanted it included in her representation at the Fondation. Thus, the order’s characteristic blue and white sash drapes across her chest, and the medal appears discreetly behind her veil (see Figure 9). While symbols of her new French imperial position support her genuflecting pose, Eugénie asked Barrias to add the Order of Maria Luisa to the painting, a directive indicating that her titled lineage and Spanish descent remained firmly posi-
tioned as integral to Eugénie’s conception of self, even as
the French empress.

The most important visualization of Eugénie’s pres-
ence at the Fondation appears in Barrias’s hemicycle and is
situated significantly in the institution’s religious core, man-
ifesting the complex conflation of grace, magnanimity, piety,
and power that Eugénie believed she should embody. Her
patronage of the Fondation and the materialization of her
beneficent act in Barrias’s hemicycle definitely assumed
increasing import during the first three years of her reign.
Eugénie’s portrait in the chapel became an expression of her
desire to prove her abilities and fulfill the demanding role
of empress of France. Key to Eugénie’s success was her posi-
tion in the continuation of the Napoleonic line, and follow-
ing the birth of a son and much-awaited heir, she named
the institution Maison Eugène Napoléon after Prince
Imperial Eugène-Louis-Jean-Joseph. The institution
opened on 31 December 1856, and its imagery continued to
promote the empress as Barrias’s hemicircle circulated in an
engraved reproduction. The Fondation opened to the pub-
lic in 1857 when it was listed in the “Monuments Publics”
section of the Salon catalog.58

Institutional Leadership during the Second
Empire and the Early Third Republic

Following the Fondation’s consecration, Damas-Hinard
ratified Eugénie’s role as principal decision-maker in insti-
tutional politics with a managerial contract, signed 1
January 1858, clearly outlining the empress’s position.59
The Sisters of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul were responsible for
the religious education and professional training of the girls
in their care. However, while the mother superior could
propose the name of a chaplain to lead the catechisms and
religious instruction, only the empress made the final
approval of any such appointment. The nominations of an
organist and doctor were also the empress’s domain.60
Further, Eugénie retained control over admissions and
reviewed the files of all applicants throughout the Second
Empire. No girl could be discharged from the Fondation’s
care or even disciplined without approval from the empress
or her representative.61

Eugénie also committed to providing ongoing funding
of three hundred francs per student per annum.62 She made
further payments of two hundred francs to each sister upon
their entrance to the institution and allotted each an annual
salary of six hundred francs.63 Building maintenance and
furniture as well as water, gas, and heating expenses were
also the empress’s responsibility. Throughout the Second
Empire, Eugénie provided monetary support of approxi-
mately one hundred fifty thousand francs annually to sup-
sport the eighteen sisters and their care of three hundred
girls.64 Eugénie also ensured that the state would position
each girl in a paying professional post when they left the
Fondation as grown women.65

As long as Eugénie was empress, the Fondation Eugène
Napoléon successfully represented religious dedication,
social progress, and imperial magnanimity. However, after
the fall of the Second Empire and throughout Eugénie’s
exile in England until her death in 1920, detractors made
much of her lack of interest in the Fondation. They said she
never visited after 1870 nor sent financial support to the
institution she had founded. Yet during these years, Eugénie
remained well informed about French politics and social
policy, and given the abusive practices of the Fondation dur-
ing the Third Republic, it is hardly surprising that she
sought to distance herself from the travesty of a public insti-
tution that it became.

In 1873, statutes governing the institution transformed
the Fondation from a nurturing environment with a caring
benefactor into an exploitative factory for the fabrication
and embroidered decoration of religious ornaments and
military uniforms.66 Young girls, nine to thirteen, still
attended classes and sewed for only two hours a day, but
girls aged thirteen to sixteen labored six hours and sixteen-
to twenty-one-year-olds eight hours a day. Primary instruc-
tion was provided, but classes focused on preparing the girls
for life as housewives, emphasizing laundry, ironing, cook-
ing, and domestic hygiene.

An institution that originally intended to equip poor
girls with professional skills to be used for self-support thus
became a state-sanctioned training ground that made the
girls dependent on spouses whom they could not meet
within the confines of the walled building. Even the exten-
sive facilities for which the building was rightly famed as a
model of modern engineering went unused. During the
Third Republic, the bathrooms and footbath facilities—
hallmarks of Hittorff’s contributions to improving personal
hygiene—were neglected as the revised statues permitted
the girls to take only one full bath and two foot baths per
month. The physical squalor and social inequalities that
Hittorff and Eugénie had, as a team, sought to improve with
the Fondation remained a product of and an experience
exclusive to the Second Empire.

Hausmann’s dismissive reference to the Fondation as
the “Maison du Collier” has had a significant impact on its
reception. However, this comment likely resulted from his
disinterest in a project initiated during the tenure of his
predecessor Berger that Hausmann inherited when
appointed prefect of the Seine in June 1853. Since the cost
of the Fondation went significantly over budget, Haussmann had the frustrating task of regularly seeking additional funds for the project. Although Haussmann attempted to diminish the Fondation in his memoirs, his comment inadvertently emphasized Hittorff’s desire to draw attention to Eugénie, the patron, and to evoke une parure, the original object for which the building’s funds were intended. Despite the tensions of Eugénie’s collaboration with Hittorff, her active engagement with the Fondation’s policies and maintenance demonstrates how, in the years spanning the Second Empire and Third Republic, the French government’s advancement of the status of women was subject to Eugénie’s dedication to reform and her promotion of women’s access to public resources. Eugénie successfully positioned the Fondation Eugène Napoléon as a vehicle to declare publicly her power as empress of France, and while she was the official patron, the innovative building manifest her proactive commitment that was necessary for the realization of social justice.

Notes
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2. I thank the Fondation’s director Olivier Buge for allowing me access on many occasions and for providing access to the Fondation’s archive.

3. Hittorff’s interest in polychrome architecture developed from his study of many occasions and for providing access to the Fondation’s archive.

4. Empress Eugénie to Jean-Jacques Berger, 26 Jan. 1853. Archive of the Fondation Eugène Napoléon, Paris (hereafter AFEN). The letter is signed “Eugénie, comtesse de Tèba, Palais de L’Elysée.” Immediately before her wedding, Eugénie lived at the Grands Corps de l’Etat, at the Palais de l’Élysée. There is no evidence to support the claim that Eugénie’s motivation to build the Fondation involved a sense of competition with Princess Mathilde, a former romantic partner of the emperor. This analysis was informed by an overemphasis on Mathilde’s pejorative discussion of Eugénie in her journal, a misrepresentative approach that dominated much twentieth-century literature on the empress. See Henry Puget, “La Curieuse histoire d’une construction en forme de collier,” Bâtir, Revue technique de la Fédération nationale du Bâtiment et des activités annexes 76 (May 1958), 52.

5. Eugénie was identified as the initiator of the Asile impérial at Vesinet, and a bust of the empress was placed in the hospital in 1865. See Maxime Vauvert, “La Saint-Eugénie à l’Asile impérial de Vincennes,” Le Monde Illustré 450 (25 Nov. 1865), 337, 342.

6. In August 1857, Hittorff was approached by a Mrs. Green regarding entrance for her daughter. He forwarded the request to Damas-Hinard to convey to the empress. Hittorff noted that the applicant’s mother was Catholic but her deceased father had been an English Protestant. The mother agreed that her daughter would be raised in the Fondation as a Catholic. Hittorff was later required to submit more material on the application to Damas-Hinard. It is not clear from Hittorff’s outgoing correspondence if the girl was accepted. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 13 Aug. and 17 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (hereafter HASK). I thank Dr. Deeters for facilitating my work with album 1053, Nr.17.


8. The first census was completed in France in 1866, statistics indicated that 54 percent of men were able to read and write, compared to 45 percent of women. 8.63 percent of men were able to read only, compared to 11.77 percent of women. 35.79 percent of men were unable to read or write, compared to 42.52 percent of women. See François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry (New York, 1982), 17.


10. The church, erected on the site where Saint Vincent de Paul died in 1660, was on the location of a twelfth-century leper hospital unused in the seventeenth century when it was transferred to Saint Vincent and Lazarist missionary priests. The parish was founded in July 1804 after the Concordat and a small chapel serviced the order until 1824, when Jean-Baptiste Lepère was hired to erect a new church. Lepère’s progress was hindered by lack of funds and disrupted by the revolution of July 1830, after which Hittorff assumed the project.

11. Hittorff began corresponding with various property owners on 6 May 1853. See album 1053, Nr. 17, HASK.

12. A letter from the Minister of the Interior (Fine Arts and Public Monuments) to Haussmann states that the emperor approved of Hittorff’s “avant projet” and engaged him to proceed with his definitive renderings; Minister of the Interior to Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, 14 July 1853, F21/797, Archives Nationales, Paris. The alteration of the number of girls is clear to Hittorff in spring 1853; letter to Hittorff, 9 May 1853, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.

13. Hittorff, presentation drawings, o.O. 1853. 10 T af. 2º, Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek, Cologne (hereafter USBK). This collection contains a complete set of the presentation drawings Hittorff prepared for the empress. I am grateful to Herrmann-Joseph Eschbach for graciously receiving me and facilitating my study of these documents. All of the drawings Hittorff prepared for his personal use are in the collection of the Graphische Sammlung, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cobourg Foundation, Cologne. I
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thank Uwe Westfehling for granting me access to this collection.
14. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 26 July 1853, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
15. Hittorff to Haussmann, 26 Sept. 1853, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Hittorff wrote, “Conformément au désir de S.M. l’Impératrice, je me suis tout d’abord occupé de chercher un terrain dans le quartier des Invalides et je n’en ai pas trouvé de plus convenable que celui indiqué au plan parcellaire, sur le Boulevard de Montparnasse.”
16. Hittorff, note, 2 Apr. 1855, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. He referred to the property as a “Domaine de l’État.” The property was donated by the city in perpetuity. See Véron “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 68.
17. Hittorff, note, 29 Sept. 1853, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
20. Hittorff, plans, o.O, 1853. 10 T af. 2º, USBK. There are 11 drawings in this set. His original plans for the altar appear in Inv.118. Inv.112 and 114 present the basilican plan; neither drawing was dated nor presented formally with an official inscription. Inv.113 and 115 present the centralized chapel plan and covered passageways; they are dated 9 Oct. 1853 and include official inscriptions. Pencil lines running between the Salon de l’Impératrice and the chapel indicate the Inv.113 drawing was a topic of discussion with Eugénie. Inv.117 includes the stained-glass windows depicting saints whom Hittorff had planned to use around the base of the dome.
21. Hittorff to Haussmann, 1 Dec. 1853, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
22. Hittorff to Haussmann, 19 Jan. 1854, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
23. Hittorff to Haussmann, 14 Apr. 1854, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
25. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 23 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. In this letter, Hittorff quotes Haussmann as saying, “leurs désirs étaient des ordres pour M. le Prétêt.”
26. Hittorff’s extensive library included Léon Emmanuel Simon Joseph de Laborde, Notices des émaux, bijoux et objets divers exposés dans les galeries du musée du Louvre, 2 vols. (Paris, 1853). Volume two, on jewelry, was the most well-thumbed, particularly pp. 184–9, 345–6, and 436. Hittorff’s library has been cataloged and is now housed in several institutions in Cologne. See Gunter Quarg, Katalog der Bibliothek Jakob Ignaz Hittorff (Cologne, 1996).
27. Hittorff to Haussmann, 30 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. In this letter, Hittorff requested a municipal commission be established to investigate the Fondation’s expense, and he detailed the expenses of each proposed mission for Napoléon III, the Cirque Napoléon.
28. César Daly, “Nouvelles et faits divers. Paris et banlieu,” Revue de l’architecture et des travaux publics 15 (1857), 102. Daly contacted Hittorff about gaining access to the building and Hittorff suggested a time, but Daly must not have followed through on the meeting. Hittorff to Daly, 14 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
29. Hittorff, notes, 20 Mar., 1 Apr., 15 May, and 17 Sept. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
30. Damas-Hinard to Hittorff, 13 Jan. 1858, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
31. Damas-Hinard to Hittorff, 31 May 1856 and 5 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
32. Hittorff to Haussmann, 5 and 30 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Hittorff also argued that numerous expenses were required by adjustments that were only realized after the institution was inhabited. Hittorff to Haussmann, 7 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
33. Hittorff detailed the expenses of each aspect of the building in the article he published in 1861, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 153 (see n. 18). In the final account Hittorff submitted to Haussmann, he tabulated the total cost as 1,610,311.56 francs. Hittorff to Haussmann, 5 Oct. 1857, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
34. Hittorff, note, 9 May 1854, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
35. Hittorff to Empress Eugénie, 29 Nov. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Hittorff requested an audience with the empress to thank her for the opportunity to travel to Italy and Greece and to extend the pope’s blessing in person. This was the only occasion on which Hittorff wrote to the empress directly.
36. Damas-Hinard to Hittorff, 18 Sept. 1854, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Hittorff also asked Haussmann if his employees could have permission to work on Sundays, as there was precedent for this at other building sites. On 23 July 1854, Hittorff had requested additional funds to enable two supervisors to alternate schedules and thus be present on the site from 6AM to 6PM. On 2 April 1855, Hittorff noted again that Eugénie expressed her desire to see the building completed as soon as possible.
37. Hittorff to Haussmann, 23 Mar. 1855, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. While there is no evidence of extant sculptures for the Salon de l’Impératrice, at the emperor’s request, copies of Winterhalter’s full-length portraits of the imperial couple were commissioned for this room. Hittorff negotiated the commission for his cousin Hansmann; these copies still flank the entrance doors of the salon. Hittorff to Haussmann, 18 and 20 Feb. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
38. Hittorff to Haussmann, 31 May 1855, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
39. Hittorff sent a detailed chart of the expenses on 10 August 1855 and specified subject matter and proposed artists’ names on 10 October 1855.
40. The artists were to be remunerated in francs as follows: Seurre, 8,000; Nanteuil, 7,300; Crauk and Hebert, 5,000 each; Milet, 6,000; and Barrias, 11,000. Hittorff also noted allocating 5,000 francs for figures of saints to be placed in the niches of the chapel’s back façade, but he did not suggest an artist for the commission. Hittorff to Haussmann, 10 Oct. 1855, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. In 1852, Barrias had worked with Hittorff on an earlier commission for Napoléon III, the Cirque Napoléon.
41. Hittorff to Haussmann, 9 Nov. 1855, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Taluet’s statues were listed in the “Monuments Publics” section of the 1857 Salon catalogue.
42. In a letter dated 7 Jan., Hittorff first mentioned that Napoléon III and Eugénie would visit as soon as good weather permitted. He wrote the same day to Damas-Hinard requesting a meeting to discuss the building and particularly a visit from the mother superior and two sisters who had visited the site, accompanied by Hittorff, and were very pleased. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 7 and 12 Jan. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
43. Hittorff to Calmels, 19 Feb. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Statues of Saints Eugénie, Napoléon, Charles Borromeo, and Francis remain in situ today, however there are no records of commissions for the latter two works. Hittorff, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 153 n.1.
44. Hittorff to Haussmann, 19 Feb. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. Haussmann agreed that Calmels’s two statues should be placed in another location; Hittorff contacted architect Victor Baltard who felt that they would be suitable for the façade of the Church of Sainte-Elizabeth, which had been in need of such decoration for some time. Calmels had to increase the scale of the statues for this new location, so Hittorff negotiated with Haussmann that Calmels be paid an additional 1,000 francs and be provided with the necessary stone by the state. Hittorff to Haussmann 26 Apr., 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
45. Damas-Hinard to Hittorff, 12 May 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
46. Hittorff commissioned seven prints to accompany his 1861 article in...
47. Hittorff, note, 12 May 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
48. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 28 June 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
49. Ibid.
50. Damas-Hinard to Hittorff, 3 July 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. After the fall of the Second Empire, Eugénie hired Cavaillé-Coll again to install an organ in the chapel of Saint-Michael’s Abbey, Farnborough. For an analysis of this project see Alison McQueen, “Empress Eugénie’s quest for a Napoleonic Mausoleum,” Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide (Feb. 2003), www.19thc-artworldwide.org/winter_03/articles/mcq.html.
51. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 3 July 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
52. Hittorff, note, 25 July 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
53. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 19 Aug. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK. In this letter, Hittorff also thanked Eugénie for the 500 francs she sent for distribution to the builders working on the Fondation.
54. Hittorff to Damas-Hinard, 28 Aug. 1856, 1053, Nr.17, HASK.
55. Previously, the rosary has been mistaken for a necklace. See Véron, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 82 (see n. 7); and Julien Mallet, “Historique de la Fondation Eugène Napoléon,” Souvenir Napoléonien 308 (Nov. 1979), 26.
56. Seculum appears to be a variation of the plural saecula, which would be more accurate according to classical Latin inscriptions. I thank Alex Retzleff for her assistance with the nuances of this translation.

Le Gray took numerous photographs of Eugénie in 1856 at the request of Thomas Couture who was then working on a large-scale painting, Baptism of the Prince Imperial, that he never completed. Several of Le Gray’s photographs are in the collection of the Château de Compiègne. See Sylvie Aubenas, ed., Gustave Le Gray, 1820–1884, (Paris, 2002).

59. Contract signed by Damas-Hinard, 1 Jan. 1858, AFEN. Four sisters signed the treaty in their capacity as officers of the institution: Sisters Elizabeth Montcellet (general superior), L. Huret (assistant), F. Lequette (treasurer) and Marie Coste (bursar). The treaty was made public knowledge as published in Véron, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 71–76.
60. The sisters paid the salaries for the organist and doctor unless they exceeded a total of 500 francs per annum, in which case supplements would be sent from imperial coffers.
61. Girls could only be accepted if they were a minimum of eight years of age and they were permitted to stay until they reached twenty-one.
62. 100 girls were to be accepted in the first year and fifty in subsequent years until the maximum enrollment of 300 students was attained. By 1860 there were 150 girls at the Fondation. Véron, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 70.
63. The sisters’ salaries were reduced to 400 francs per annum when the number of students enrolled reached 200.
64. Hittorff, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 154 (see n. 18).
65. In 1858, a private posthumous donation from Sieur Louis-Desfontaines Laly provided further financial support to the women when they began their independent lives. Laly document, 19 Feb. 1858, AFEN. Laly’s donation was approved by Napoléon III as part of a supplemental document on the Fondation of 1 Oct. 1858. The effectiveness of this donation has been challenged since legal issues purportedly decreased the value of the donation. See Véron, “Maison Eugène Napoléon,” 69.
66. Orphélinat du Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Status et Règlement, 8, 10–12; 1 Dec. 1873, D2X2/1, Archives de Paris. This document was signed by MacMahon, Broglie, and Normand.

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