

## Visualizing History in Eighteenth-Century France

ANYONE REFLECTING ON THE RELATION of the “image” to “history” in the eighteenth century, as I have been asked to do for this essay, must begin with Francis Haskell’s *History and Its Images* (1993), the major work on that subject.<sup>1</sup> In a book of impressive scope and erudition, Haskell addressed an important problem: what is the impact of the visual arts on the historical imagination? His study, as he described it, explored “how, when, and why historians have tried to recapture the past, or at least a sense of the past, by adopting the infinitely seductive course of looking at the image that the past has left of itself.”<sup>2</sup> He surveyed historians from Petrarch (1304–74) through Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) and examined how they used images as historical tools or as part of their historical method, addressing questions about the nature of visual evidence and the ground on which it is interpreted that such an investigation inevitably raised. Reading *History and Its Images* now, I am struck by two things. First is the dishearteningly negative verdict it passes on the consequence of images to historians; for all the authors he discusses, not one comes up to the mark of integrating images into narrative histories or of reckoning works of art as constitutive of history. Second is the surprisingly little impact *History and Its Images* has had within the field of art history, and in other disciplines for that matter, despite having been widely reviewed. A possible explanation may be that Haskell does not show *why* images mattered or how people engaged with them when they did. In keeping with his formation as a historian, he kept his sights firmly trained on major narratives written by professional historians such as Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89). What Haskell’s study leaves out, though it does suggest, is the interest taken in *visualizing*

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**ABSTRACT** This essay explores an impulse to visualize history in eighteenth-century France. It focuses on massive compilations of printed images that assembled overviews of history as represented by artifacts, portraits, and events and compares that documentary mode of visualizing the past to imaginary reconstructions of historical events in illusionistic scenes as depicted in the radically different formats of book illustration and monumental history painting. REPRESENTATIONS 145. Winter 2019 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 80–106. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/REP.2019.145.1.80>.

history and in concretizing textual accounts of it through material remains of the past and images of them.

Narrative was only one form that an interest in history took in the eighteenth century. People's engagement with artifacts, images of them, and images that envisioned past events and personalities was extremely important and part of what might be called a larger historical imaginary. This visual engagement with the past fed indirectly into serious historical narratives. Gibbon said he was inspired to write *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by going to the Roman forum and seeing its extensive monumental architecture at first hand, even though no visual analysis or description of the ruins enters into his history.<sup>3</sup> Haskell was so intent on pointing out the separation of visual experience and published histories, and on pointing out disparities between them, that he did not explore the power and draw of images and artifacts in their relation to a historical imaginary. Yet one could say that visual artifacts informed the period's fervent interest in Roman antiquities and drew readers to Gibbon's book. There was a subliminal relationship between images and texts, a give-and-take that makes visual representation difficult to separate from historical representation and also makes its agency difficult to define: visual experience played into an interest in history, just as knowledge of history prompted curiosity about material artifacts, events, and people of the past, but without a systematic connection between the visual and the textual.

This essay argues that an impulse to visualize history through prints, drawings, and paintings took hold during the eighteenth century, with consequences for the newly popular print media's effect on conceptualizations of history that remain insistently elusive. It was as if history, which conventionally drew its authority from texts, needed a supporting network of images to bring one closer to the past and lend a reality to its accounts. Theories and concepts of history were never argued through images, but these "visual documents," as one might call them, still seemed capable of bridging the gap between present and past. If the mounting accumulation of images that bore witness to history in the eighteenth century could be said to have exerted an influence on writing about historical processes and events, the French Revolution placed some in evidence. The Revolution was seen as the ultimate event produced by history up to that time. It changed history's course, and its energies seem to have released visual images from the usual textual scaffolding that bore witness to events that were perceived as making history. This development implied that history, or at least a history of the Revolution, would need to, and have no choice but to, incorporate images in order to provide a complete record of events, though how far this view of visual testimony extended remains is, by its very nature, impossible to pin down.

Some basic questions about terms of reference might be posed at the outset. What conditions enabled an impulse to visualize history to develop during the eighteenth century and what forms did it take? Equally important, what was meant by “history” at the time? An interest in secular history was decidedly on the rise during this period, which expanded the possibilities for imagining the human’s relation to the world and to time. Sales and reviews of history books and geographies increased steadily relative to books of theology and jurisprudence, indicating inquisitiveness on the part of the reading public about those areas of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, visual images multiplied, especially in the form of prints but in other media as well. Every quantitative measure of material culture in the eighteenth century attests to continuing growth in the consumption and production of paintings, prints, drawings, illustrated books, illustrated journals, and decorative arts embellished with images, to say nothing of forms of visual spectacle and popular entertainment or of images produced from optical experiments in the natural sciences.<sup>5</sup> This expansion of visual culture was especially marked during the second half of the century, when an increase in prosperity and education led to an increased demand for printed images of all sorts for educational, informational, and entertainment purposes. There were so many printed images in circulation that the age was sometimes called “the papered century” or, in Germany, *Papierkultur*.<sup>6</sup>

An impulse to visualize the past during this period can be divided into roughly two modalities: an antiquarian impulse to collect artifacts and to document them visually in drawings and prints, on the one hand, and an imaginary impulse to recreate scenes or events of the past through illusionistic renderings of them, on the other. In what follows, I look at examples from both realms, beginning with the documentary mode. This primarily took the form of objects, including prints, assembled in private collections and occasionally published. Here I shall focus on those collectors specifically interested in historical subjects. I then move to the imaginary mode, which envisioned past events visually as stories with actions and actors. I consider illustrations that were integrated into history books as well as large-scale history paintings that detached their representations of subjects from any ordinary texts. In the final section of the essay, I return to the documentary mode to consider the role of printed images during the French Revolution as creators of instant history.

The term “history” was so broadly used in the eighteenth century that it can be confusing to readers today. It embraced everything from compilations of knowledge such as natural history to stories in the sense of “*istoria*” as defined in Giorgio Vasari’s sixteenth-century treatise on painting. The deceptive breadth of the concept is suggested by Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville’s use of it in a long essay published in the *Mercure de France* in

1727. Dezallier (1680–1765), a royal administrator and lawyer, was an avid collector and writer on subjects ranging from gardening and natural history to the fine arts. In his essay, he advised collectors on how to organize a cabinet of curiosities, including sizeable collections of printed images. The publication of this essay in the *Mercure* attests to the rise of the private collector or connoisseur and the importance of connoisseurial knowledge as a social code of distinction and language of polite sociability. Regarding prints, Dezallier advised collectors to classify them by *subject matter* rather than by artist, contrary to the market’s preference for identification by author, and to place them under three broad categories: history, portraits, and landscapes.<sup>7</sup> The prominence of *histoire* in this scheme is highly suggestive, but on closer inspection, Dezallier appears to have meant “history” in the traditional and benign sense of “story.” He divided the category into sacred and profane history, which was conventional enough, but then proceeded to correlate profane history with the artists Godfrey Kneller, John Closterman, Daniel Teniers, and Adriaen van Ostade. These were seventeenth-century painters of portraits and low-life genre scenes, and they strike us today as surprising choices to exemplify a category largely associated with political or diplomatic events or judicial transactions of the past, subjects those artists rarely, if ever, painted.<sup>8</sup> What, then, did Dezallier mean by “history”? He certainly was not thinking of what we might consider social history or a history of changing customs or *moeurs*. The question becomes all the more insistent in light of Dezallier’s classification of subjects that we often regard as historical events—“marriages,” “funerals,” “entries,” “battles,” “sieges,” “army marches”—under the category of landscape, not under *histoire*.<sup>9</sup> His classification scheme suggests that ceremonies were perceived as ahistorical, as transcending time by virtue of repeating ritual enactments of power, or alternatively as transpiring in space (like “landscape”) more than in time. In attempting to understand what he meant by “history,” it becomes relevant to consider his debt to a rhetorical mode of classifying the fine arts, a realm with which he was very familiar as an art collector and writer on art. In the fine arts, “history” encompassed anything with narrative; “portraits” referred to portrayals of individuals; and “landscape” embraced representations of the environment.<sup>10</sup> His use of the term “history,” then, was period specific and inflected by practice and criticism within the realm of the fine arts.

### **The Documentary Impulse: Ancient History**

Dezallier’s association of history with narrative, oddly instanced by painters of low life and portraits, indicates how amorphous and expansive

ideas of history were at the beginning of the century. One gets quite a different, but no less prevalent, sense of history from the collections of printed images that amateurs and scholars assembled during this period, which were *denarrativized* in their documentary approach to visualizing the past. Such collections were massive and ran into the tens of thousands of prints, some exceeding a hundred thousand; they were the largest concentrations of images to be found anywhere at the time. Although only a modicum of research has been done on them, it is clear that eighteenth-century collectors continued traditions and specialisms that had been established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as soon as printed images began to circulate and be collected. Eighteenth-century collecting practice was not new, nor could it be said to have generated new ways of writing history.<sup>11</sup> What these eighteenth-century collectors did, however, was to assemble prints into a “picture” of a history that created an increasingly systematic overview and made history seem more immediate by virtue of being imaged. Prints of historical subjects represented only a small percentage of the content of large-scale print collections, yet the very fact that they emerged as a theme indicates a commitment to the visualization of history and an appetite for concrete visual evidence of historical remains, personalities, and events. This collecting activity took place within relatively elite and learned social strata in private cabinets scattered throughout Europe (I concentrate here on France), where prints were assembled in portfolios and mounted in albums. The collectors of prints of historical subjects whom I have considered—a monk, a lawyer, a minor noble, and a provincial cleric—were geographically scattered and do not seem to have engaged in collecting as a sociable activity or means of knowledge exchange, in the way that Parisian collectors of prints of artworks and of natural history specimens are known to have done; but their social backgrounds suggest that history was gaining interest among reasonably wealthy men who had the means, leisure, and curiosity to form collections of prints.<sup>12</sup>

The collectors addressed by Dezallier in the *Mercur*e would have understood “history” as conventionally divided into sacred and secular realms, as he did, and generally as the study of the past, a temporal and narrative domain quite separate from the descriptive and analytic realm of natural *history*.<sup>13</sup> For the eighteenth century, “the past” almost invariably meant ancient history, particularly Greece and Rome, as the primary theater in which a historical imagination staged itself. Antiquarian collections predominated across Europe over every other kind with a historical bent until well into the nineteenth century. They incorporated not only material artifacts—coins, metalwork, vases and pottery, figurines, statues, architectural fragments, and so on—but also drawings and prints of artifacts.

The Benedictine monk Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) was one of the most noted antiquarians of his day, publishing his magnum opus, *Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (*Antiquity Explained and Represented in Sculptures*; 1719, 1724), early in the century. Famously, and unusually, he progressed from collecting antiquities and images of them to collecting artifacts and images of modern history, the latter compiled and published in his unfinished *Monumens de la monarchie française* (*Monuments of the French monarchy*; 1729–33).<sup>14</sup> A desire to visualize the past was precisely what compelled Montfaucon to turn away from texts toward images of classical antiquity. He had established himself as a distinguished textual critic when he was asked by the church to publish an edition of the Greek Church Fathers. He remained dissatisfied after reading all the Greek and Latin authors and began collecting printed images that might help him understand ancient history and mythology. In effect, he embarked on a study of pagan literature and profane history in the interest of illuminating the writings of the Greek Church.<sup>15</sup> It was after twenty-six years of collecting artifacts, prints, and drawings, by which time Montfaucon had transformed himself into a reputed antiquarian, that he decided to publish his visual research as an illustrated study. The remarkable thing about *Antiquity Explained*, and his later study, is that they were published at all, given the expense and technological complexities of publishing illustrated books at the time. Extraordinarily for the period, *Antiquity Explained* was illustrated with no fewer than thirty thousand images (“*en figures*”) in more than fifteen volumes, including a multivolume supplement (fig. 1).

Montfaucon wrote with considerable conviction about the value of images for the historian:

A Verbal Description, however exact and particular it may be, can never give us such a clear Idea of some things, as the Image and Picture of those things themselves,

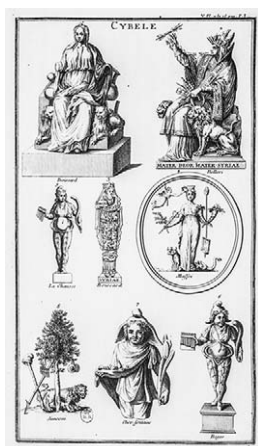


FIGURE 1. “Cybele,” in Bernard de Montfaucon, *Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures, Supplément*, vol. 1, *Les Dieux des Grecs et des Romains* (Paris, 1719), plate V. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

drawn from the Life. Hence it happens that they who have tried from an Historical Narrative to form the Image and Representation of such things, have never been able to do it with any Exactness, tho' they took never such Care. . . . The real Image surpasses vastly the Idea we form'd from the Description of the Writer, or Picture of the Designer, who drew them only from Conjecture, . . . for no Narrative, however plain or full, can teach us what one Glance of the Eye will: Images copied from Monuments produce the same Effect *almost*, as being upon the very Spot, and having set before our Eyes distinctly, what we imperfectly knew by Report.<sup>16</sup>

By the “real Image” he usually meant engravings or drawings of antique monuments, sculptures, metalwork, and coins, though the phrase could embrace actual physical and visual encounters with objects and monuments. Reproductive images “*almost*” stood in for the real thing. Montfaucon argued that images could correct scholars’ errors and even supply information that texts lacked.<sup>17</sup> Despite the strong claims he made for the historical value of images, however, his view of their relation to history remained conventional, since he saw them as amplifying classical texts:

By the help of these Monuments we shall read the ancient Writers with much more Advantage: The Images here will instruct us in many things more surely than the Authors themselves, and we too shall read them with more Pleasure.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, images made reading history more vivid and accessible. That was one of the three functions traditionally ascribed to them in the early modern period, usually with regard to religious pictures, the other two being instruction of the illiterate and aiding memory.<sup>19</sup>

The main purpose of a compilation of images like Montfaucon’s, or those of other collectors I shall be discussing, was to provide unspoken corroboration of history and bring one into closer contact with the past through its visualization. No one ever explained *how* looking at an image made history more immediate or present, but this impression clearly depended on the assumed capacity of images to conjure up a visual reality and to assert their own concrete reality as material objects.

In Montfaucon’s case, the impulse to visualize history propelled itself toward a conviction that images could relate history on their own. Montfaucon presented a vision of antiquity that he believed yielded an overview of the classical past by bringing all these images together. Were these “visual documents” or visual “facts” sufficient to constitute a history of antiquity? Voltaire thought not: in the definition of “history” he supplied for Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert’s encyclopedia, he maintained that narrative was required.<sup>20</sup> Yet Montfaucon thought images were enough: he claimed that two years spent studying the figures in *Antiquity Explained* would give one command of the subject and do so a good deal faster than wading through the classical authors, to say nothing of the “frightening” number of

“prolix” and partial studies of antiquities that modern scholars were churning out.<sup>21</sup> Whether Montfaucon’s *Antiquity Explained* can be called a visual history, given its lack of a comprehensive narrative, is open to question. Historians such as Gibbon and Johann Joachim Winckelmann went to Montfaucon for documentary detail, but not to find indications of the schematic narratives about the past they were trying to reconstruct.

Montfaucon’s volumes were products of a print culture through and through. He collected any and all engravings of antiquities that he could lay hands on and actively solicited prints and drawings of artifacts that he was unable to actually see from librarians, keepers, and antiquarian collectors with whom he corresponded. He hoovered images up into an overview of everything relating to the ancients and organized them into a typological scheme, composed of categories such as “Theology,” “Civil Life,” “War,” and “Funerals.” The plates in his volumes set out multiple examples under each heading (see fig. 1). While the quantity of images was impressive by period standards, their quality was not high. As engraved illustrations that reproduced other engravings and drawings, they were at least twice removed from the objects they depicted. Montfaucon himself did not perceive this distance from the original as problematic. He was lax in his critical examination of the visual evidence and naively believed that engravings and drawings “almost” stood in for the real thing. Their function was documentary. Aesthetic considerations rarely came into their selection, layout, or rendering, as they did in luxurious folio editions of natural history specimens from the same period.<sup>22</sup> The “documentary mission of the print” was regarded as paramount, to quote the keeper of the royal print cabinet in Paris, from a letter to his counterpart in Dresden, regarding the obligation of prints and collections of them to record the art and civilization of the ancients, which would otherwise be lost to moderns.<sup>23</sup> That “documentary mission” fully accords with Montfaucon’s understanding of the prints he collected and reproduced as creating a visual archive that would preserve the memory of historical objects and events.

Such beliefs in the documentary value of prints of historical artifacts notwithstanding, the German antiquarian Winckelmann later criticized Montfaucon for placing too much faith in images and failing to examine the antiquities themselves—failing to notice, for example, important restorations that complicated their dating. The conventions of *visual* representation (what was later called “style”) remained as invisible to Montfaucon as they did to most observers of his day. Precisely because the images were perceived as transparent to the objects they depicted, Montfaucon’s studies set a precedent for visual compilations of historical artifacts and continued to exert influence through their material status as publications.



Winckelmann was one of the first antiquarians to attend to the formal language of the depiction of figures on antique coins and in antique sculptures. Even his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (History of the art of antiquity; 1764), however, for all its extraordinary sensitivity to the visual evidence, was initially published with very few illustrations. There were chapter head- and tailpieces and reproductions of a few engraved gems and coins scattered through the first edition and no illustrations at all in the second Vienna edition of 1776; only the Italian and French editions of the 1780s finally incorporated large illustrations of the major works he discussed.<sup>24</sup> Winckelmann's texts consequently relied on word-pictures of two types, empirical descriptions of objects and lyrical evocations of selected antique sculptures for which he became known. The publication history of Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity*, regarded as the foundational text of the discipline of art history, raises the question of whether it was possible to tell history through or with images before one had a history of art.

### **The Documentary Impulse: Modern History**

A few print collectors departed from ancient history as the pre-eminent field for imagining and documenting the past, as Montfaucon himself did, and began collecting images of more recent history, eras which were later called the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This was one manifestation of the growing interest in secular history. The emergence of specialized interests in early modern history occurred in a happenstance, random way: one collector might favor a particular personality such as Henry IV, another, a particular period. Unlike Montfaucon's *Monuments of the French Monarchy*, these private collections of prints of postantique historical subjects were not published. But they did not lack influence: the three collections I discuss here were bequeathed or sold to the state and became the spines of the great series of historical prints (Qb-1, Hennin, and de Vinck) still housed in the Cabinet des estampes of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.<sup>25</sup> That print room was open by appointment to "the curious," who tended to be titled or learned visitors, in the eighteenth century. After 1789, when the royal collections were nationalized, artists and actors were among those patrons authorized to borrow prints and albums from the library.<sup>26</sup> These collections of national history subjects stood as precedents for visual documentation of the events and personalities of the French Revolution as a present and unfolding history.

One collection, assembled by Jean-Pierre Imbert Châtre, Sieur de Cangé (1680?–1746), contained nothing but images of Henry IV—nearly 160



FIGURE 2. Jean Pierre Imbert Châtre, S[ieu]r de Cangé, *Estampes du Roy Henry IV, recueillies par J. P.G. Châtre, Sr de Cangé* (n.p., 1726), fol. 34. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

engravings, primarily portraits and the occasional scene (fig. 2).<sup>27</sup> The scenes do not represent all the significant events in the king's life or reign; as a biographical or political narrative, the collection's illustration is strikingly incomplete. This may simply have been an effect of which prints the collector could get or, alternatively and more likely, of his overriding interest in portraits. Châtre de Cangé's compilation was a highly specialized example of print collections dedicated to portraits—portraiture often formed the largest and most important category in more comprehensive print collections. Portraiture bore a special relation to history, since for centuries it had been the primary figurative evidence of the past accessible to writers, evidence that included portraits engraved on coins and medals.<sup>28</sup> Portraits were one of the oldest embodiments of history: figurative representatives of eras or reigns were incorporated early on into manuscripts, published anthologies, or galleries of rulers and distinguished figures, and, in historical narratives, famous personages were increasingly portrayed as actors or agents of history. Visual portraits served as prompts for oral recitations or recollections of past events, and there are documented cases of young members of ruling elites still being taught ancient history and French history in this manner during the eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Châtre de Cangé's collection can be regarded as *typological* in its principle of organization, with its concentration on Henry IV as an exemplary king. There was a shift to a *chronological* principle of organization in Fevret de Fontette's collection of prints of modern history. Charles-Marie Fevret de Fontette (1710–72) assembled the most important collection of prints of the modern history of France in this period. Totalling about twenty thousand prints, it covered the history of France from the Gauls through Louis XV and included images of events as well as portraits.<sup>30</sup> Fevret de

Fontette's focus on national history began in a bibliographic project, updating the standard bibliography of French history, which he expanded from one to four volumes.<sup>31</sup> This Burgundian lawyer, much like Bernard de Montfaucon, began collecting printed images as an aid to research, to help him visualize the history of France, which he was tracing through bibliography. He organized his prints into a strict chronology of the events and actors pictured, albeit not of the date of the prints' execution, and included many prints that were produced retrospectively to the event depicted. In other words, he continued to regard the prints as documents rather than as artistic creations in their own right. His privileging of iconography over the date of the execution of the printed image subsequently resulted in considerable confusion among users of the Qb-1 series in the Bibliothèque nationale.<sup>32</sup>

Fevret de Fontette came even closer than Montfaucon to narrating history through images. He also conceived of images as supplementary to historical texts, as Montfaucon did, but he compiled them into the format of a book, one image per page, rather than clustering multiple images on a single sheet to illustrate a theme. This sequence of discreet images, arranged in chronological order (of subjects), created a visual narrative of history. Moreover, the collector designed his elephant-folio volumes to resemble books: he composed and decorated title pages and section pages in imitation of engravings, with titles and dates, legends, and frames all handwritten or drawn to look like the texts and formats included within engravings (fig. 3). This very elaborate bookish presentation of the mounted prints tends to turn them into a kind of visual history of France. A temporality is built into the viewing of these grand in-folio volumes as their pages are turned, creating a visual trajectory of historical events that moves the

FIGURE 3. Charles-Marie Fevret de Fontette, *Recueil d'estampes, desseins, etc. représentant une suite des événements de l'histoire de France, à commencer depuis les Gaulois, jusques et y compris le règne de Louis XV, 1760s–1772, vol. "1660: Entrée Louis XIV."* Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



viewer-reader through time. Despite their chronological organization and sequence of discrete legends, however, these volumes of pictures lack a connecting or synthetic narrative. Fevret de Fontette's collection might be considered less a visual history of France than a chronicle in images: its additive progression simply ended when the collector stopped collecting.

### **The Imaginary Impulse: Book Illustration**

It is interesting how long it took for images to get into history books. Illustrated history books were still not the norm in the nineteenth century, much less in the eighteenth, when they were few and far between. The function illustrations served in early history books was similar, however, to that of the more plentiful images found in their modern counterparts and occasionally in articles today: they offer an interesting supplement to the narrative text. The visual material included in a history book might shift a reader's perspective on the subject, but it almost never plays a formative role in conceptualizing historical events or processes, nor does it illustrate a grand theoretical trend or changing conception of history. (Michel Foucault's discussion of Velásquez's *Las Meninas* as the preface to his analysis of a shift from classical to modern epistemes in *Les Mots et les choses* stands as a notable exception.) All the same, images were and are thought to be advantageous to include in historical texts because they provide the reader with a sense of coming closer to historical phenomena without being required for interpretation.

Printed images were rarely integrated into historical narratives in the eighteenth century, as the denarrativized compilations of prints of historical artifacts and subjects I have been discussing indicate. The beginnings of an attempt to bring images into historical narratives can be seen in Charles Rollin's *Histoire ancienne des Égyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Mèdes et des Perses, des Macédoniens, des Grecs* (The ancient history of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians; 1731–38). Rollin's book was one of the most widely read ancient histories published in eighteenth-century France, owing to its use in pedagogical instruction, though it was hardly of the intellectual stature of the grand histories written by *philosophes*, such as Montesquieu's *Considérations sur la grandeur des romains et de leur decadence* (Considerations on the causes of the greatness of the Romans and their decline; 1735) and Voltaire's *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (The age of Louis XIV; 1752).<sup>33</sup> At a mundane level, Rollin exemplifies Haskell's thesis about the inconsequentiality of visual images for historians, since most editions of Rollin were not illustrated

at all. This was largely an index of expense as *the* major factor determining book illustration in the eighteenth century: middling-priced editions of Rollin were embellished with purely ornamental vignettes on the title and opening chapter (or “book”) pages, while only deluxe editions had figurative illustrations, situated as chapter headpieces, and foldout maps. The figurative illustrations in question included a mix of historical scenes and allegories; no consistent effort was made to visualize key episodes narrated in the chapters. These figurative illustrations were designed and engraved by Jacques Philippe Lebas, who was on the payroll of the Cabinet du Roi at Versailles and was presumably recruited by the publisher to embellish deluxe editions of the text.<sup>34</sup>

The figurative illustrations in Rollin reveal a traditional idea of the relationship between “image” and “history” by the literal faithfulness of the image to represent the text. The conventional dependency of images of the past on texts derived from the inevitably prior representation of events in written historical works. Lebas’s *Entrevûe d’Hannibal et de Scipion* (Interview of Hannibal and Scipio) is a case in point (fig. 4). This vignette



FIGURE 4. Jacques Philippe Lebas, “Entrevûe d’Annibal et de Scipion.” Engraving, 7.81 × 15.6 cm (headpiece) of Charles Rollin, *Histoire ancienne des Carthaginois*, in *Histoire anciennes des Égyptiens, des Carthaginois...* (Paris, 1740), 1:101. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

summarizes Rollin's second book, the *Ancient History of the Carthaginians*, by condensing the contest between Rome and Carthage or Italy and Africa into a confrontation between Scipio and Hannibal, the two greatest generals of their day, and their armies. Costume elements identify the nations and the location, while the sartorial vocabulary remains classical. This picture of a historical event is more bookish than it would have been in a large-scale painting, whose conventions favored action and animated gestures: in Lebas's print, emblematic figures of the generals stand and face each other statically across a wedge of space. We can imagine this wedge of space as filled with words, for the scene enacts a dialogue made famous by Livy's history of Rome, *Ad Urbe Condita Libri* (Books from the foundation of the city; ca. 27–9 BCE). The generals first eyed each other—"For a moment they remained silent, looking at each other and almost dumbfounded by mutual admiration"—before Hannibal made a long speech suing for peace and Scipio rejected his suit in a shorter address, leading to the Second Punic War.<sup>35</sup> Lebas followed Rollin's paraphrase of Livy in selecting that decisive verbal exchange for his image, which thus depended upon and sought to illustrate a significant passage in the historical text.

Lebas's figurative vignette made this key moment memorable by visualizing it: *The Interview of Hannibal and Scipio* summarized a world-historical event in one scene and personified it, all without relinquishing the decorative function of the image defined by its placement as a chapter headpiece. All the same, the diminutive scale of the image and the relative scarcity of images in the volumes attests to their incidental role in the form of Rollin's *Ancient History*, and this ratio extended to its content as well: Rollin unusually included a chapter on the arts at the end of his history, but, as Haskell has pointed out, he neither made use of the visual arts in his writing nor discussed them as a measure of the value of past civilizations.<sup>36</sup>

If Rollin's publisher was at the forefront of integrating printed images into historical narratives in this period, one needs to turn to other areas of visual culture for attempts to form a picture of the past and to get at a more palpable and precise reconstruction of its material culture. History paintings of historical subjects are the obvious example of an imaginary mode of visualizing the past. Paintings occupied a level of visual culture different from printed book illustrations, but for both media visualizing history as *event* presented pictorial issues quite different from those encountered in documenting artifacts or making portraits, since picturing an event required condensation of temporal duration, spatial expansion, and figural complexity in one scene. Occasionally, visualizations of events were expanded into a series of several scenes. Since picturing past events invariably depended on their prior representation in texts, a literary idea generally stood behind and generated any visualization.



## The Imaginary Impulse: History Painting

Paintings from the last quarter of the eighteenth century that visualized historical events displayed a heightened fidelity to the past. The documentary impulse, which made collections and publications of historical artifacts, especially antiquities, available for consultation, influenced this concern with getting the past right. Paintings had the advantages of color and potentially impressive scale over prints, and they offered history painters an opportunity to exercise a certain interpretive license. We see this in Jacques-Louis David's (1748–1825) scenes of Roman history, *Le Serment des Horaces* (The oath of the Horatii; 1785, Musée du Louvre, Paris) and *Les Licteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils* (The lictors returning to Brutus the bodies of his sons, 1789; fig. 5). These were part of an ambitious program of monumental paintings depicting great moments of ancient and modern national history inaugurated in 1774, coincident with Louis XVI's accession to the throne, by the director of the Bâtiments du Roi, Charles-Claude Flahaut de la Billaderie, comte d'Angiviller (1730–1809).

Most history paintings were conceived and executed as stand-alone works of art and rendered their subjects in a single pictorial field (rather than as part of a series). They consequently isolated an event pictorially from a broader narrative, but, since they told familiar stories, a narrative context hovered around the painted scene, which informed viewers would have recalled to mind. Following a method of imagining a historical event that was diametrically opposed to Lebas's "mirroring" of a passage in Rolin's *Ancient History*, David effectively invented the subjects of his paintings,

FIGURE 5. Jacques-Louis David, *Les Licteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils*, 1789. Oil on canvas, 323 × 422 cm. Photo: Erich Lessing, Musée du Louvre, Paris/Art Resource, NY.



which in the *Horatii* and the *Brutus* do not correspond to scenes described in the classical texts.<sup>37</sup> Instead of deferring to the text as the illustrator did, David deduced his subjects by reading around in the classical authors and interpreting them in light of the political and social concerns of his day. In this respect, his paintings might be compared to the histories written by *philosophes* such as Voltaire and Montesquieu in that they singled out events that placed the larger ethical and moral implications of a subject in evidence and brought out its resonance for the present. While David relaxed the traditional grip of classical texts on pictorial composition, he intensified his study of the visual documentation of ancient history. It is the visual details of his paintings, not his illustration of a historical text, that convey his commitment to historical accuracy. David attempted to reconstruct the *look* of the past through assiduous research into its customs, costumes, furnishings, and architecture. His foregrounding of an archaeological truth of ancient Rome in his paintings, rendered in a terse, monumental style, made their illusions of classical history seem persuasive and powerful.

### **The Documentary Impulse: Revolutionary History**

Given the multiplication of images in the eighteenth century and the growing impulse to visualize the past, did this visual culture have any effect on perceptions or understandings of history? Some effect was discernable in prints that documented the French Revolution, in two respects: their visualizations spilled over into painting and collections of them as “instant history” were rooted in the eighteenth-century print collections of historical events and personalities.

With the French Revolution, history no longer belonged primarily to the past, even when cast as a rebirth of ancient Rome, but to the present and to an unpredictable future. Representations of the Revolution brought into play a notion of history as something directly and immediately witnessed. The transformative power of the Revolution was seen in events that were not only the most recent but also the most representable by visual means. Images produced during the Revolution show a new understanding of visual documentation as constitutive of history: recording something as it appeared immediately in the present was to set down on paper or on canvas (and more rarely in clay) the materials of history for the future. The idea that visually registering the customs and costume of the present could provide the materials for history was already current by the late 1770s and 1780s, and this chronicling of contemporary mores was now extended to include political events and manifestations.<sup>38</sup> As has often been related, the French



Revolution precipitated a shift in the temporality of history painting to the immediate present, prying it away from the academically favored realms of mythology and ancient history and the politically compromised realm of modern national or monarchical history. Less well appreciated, perhaps, is the seminal role played by printmakers and lower-ranking genre and landscape painters in visualizing Revolutionary events. Once they secured the backing of the Republican government, they eventually forced history painters to follow suit. One of the great struggles between an enlarged and enfranchised body of artists and the Directory and Consular governments (1795–1804) was over what constituted a historical event worthy of representation according to the aesthetic standards of the fine arts.<sup>39</sup> In the end, contemporary history was elevated to the rank of grand history painting thanks to Napoleon's decisive intervention, though the artistic status of contemporary events remained troubled and qualified for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

The pressure of rapid political change prompted some painters to turn to prints of current events for inspirations. The young history painter Charles Thévenin (1764–1838), winner of the Prix de Rome in 1791, responded to the revolutionary government's call on artists to demonstrate their patriotism by exhibiting his drawing or etching *Prise de la Bastille* (The storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789; 1790) at the Salon of 1793.<sup>40</sup> Thévenin had already sought public legitimation for his print of this subject by announcing its publication in newspapers in March 1790. The editor of *Le Moniteur* singled out the expressive qualities of the etching as conveying the artist's enthusiasm for the subject (fig. 6):

The free, manly execution has all the liberty that only a lively point, a vigorous etching, can give, and cannot be expected from a cold graver, by the very fact of its purity.<sup>41</sup>

The editor, probably encouraged by Thévenin, went so far as to interpret the spirited execution of the print as evidence that the artist had been a witness of, and even a participant in, the event:

This work, drawn and engraved by M. Thévenin with a fervor worthy of the memorable action it re-creates, does infinite honour to the artist's talent, and indeed, we are tempted to add, to his courage; for the genuine and terrible atmosphere that reigns throughout this scene leads us to believe that one who has succeeded so well in transmitting it must have experienced it himself, and that he was both witness and participant.<sup>42</sup>

The animated execution of the etching communicated a documentary immediacy even though it was executed seven months after the event. Thévenin thus managed to pick up on the provocation of earlier prints published by the commercial printmakers on the rue St. Jacques, who responded immediately



FIGURE 6. Charles Thévenin, *Prise de la Bastille*, 1790. Etching, 37.3 × 58.3 cm. Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

to the Bastille event.<sup>43</sup> Thévenin “elevated” popular commercial images of that kind into the domain of fine art through his academic treatment of the figures and the composition; indeed, he made his Salon debut with the subject in 1793. He consolidated that move two years later by exhibiting an oil painting of the same subject at the Salon of 1795 (now in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris). The painting replicated the elaborate composition of the earlier etching in reverse on a canvas that was nearly the same in size (etching, 37.3 × 58.3 cm; painting, 41 × 58.5 cm), in a more considered, artistically significant, and official (if not commissioned) rendition of the event.<sup>44</sup> Here was a striking inversion of the traditional relationship between painting and print, in which a print generated a painting rather than reproducing one. This was a clear-cut example of contemporary history entering the precinct of the fine arts by the back door of lowly prints of current events.

The visual forms that representations of the Revolution took are remarkable for their awareness that history was being made in the present and by “the people” or their representatives rather than by kings and titled elites. The following excerpt from a 1791 prospectus for a series of engravings is filled with dramatic self-consciousness of the participants’ ability to make history and of artists’ will to record those radical changes:

The genius of Liberty awakens the genius of the arts, exalts its power, broadens its scope, makes it worthy of the Nation and immortalizes its works. Citizen artists will engrave the great tableaux of our Revolution in a manner worthy of a free France, of a Europe moving toward freedom and of mankind, destined to be free. They will have to recount violent uprisings, terrible scenes and examples of prodigious virtue.<sup>45</sup>

The compilations of prints and drawings that documented Revolutionary events as they were transpiring, both published and unpublished, envisioned history from the outset in the form of the series, which told a story through a chronological sequence of images. The temporal intervals between them were short, making the history of the present dense and thick. These serial representations of key events and personalities set out to show and to validate political developments that were often still controversial as constituting the history of the period.

No fewer than six series of engravings of revolutionary events were launched in the 1790s. The best known and most voluminous, widely disseminated, and counterfeited was the *Tableaux historique de la Révolution française ou Analyse des principaux événements qui ont eu lieu en France depuis la transformation des Etats-Généraux en Assemblée nationale, le 20 juin 1789* (Historical pictures of the French Revolution or analysis of the main events that took place in France since the transformation of the Estates General into a National Assembly on June 20, 1789; Paris, 1791–1817). Consisting of 144 plates initially published in monthly installments of two engravings each, these elaborate prints depicted key moments of the Revolution (conforming in that respect to the paradigms of biblical history and of ancient history as related by Gibbon) in large multiframe scenes accompanied by portraits and historical notices (fig. 7).<sup>46</sup> The publishers presented their collaborators as eyewitnesses, calling the draftsmen “eyewitnesses to the upheavals of the Revolution” who sometimes “risked their lives.” Writers of the commentaries also assumed the vantage point of eyewitness observers, especially in the early editions (1791–94 and 1798).<sup>47</sup> The desire to meet a demand for images of “events as they happen” was frustrated, however, by the time required to make a burin engraving, a painstaking process that could take anywhere from eighteen months to two years. The process was frequently delayed by interruptions—most publishing was suspended during the Terror (1793–94), for example—that could turn the gap between an event and its illustration into three or four years.<sup>48</sup> All the same, the engraved images in the *Historical Pictures of the French Revolution* withstood the test of time better than the accompanying texts, since the images remained constant while the notices were repeatedly revised. The texts were revised five times in each of the editions published between 1791 and 1817, a progressive alteration that changed the work’s political coloration, as one cataloger put it, “from the most vivid red to the most immaculate white.”<sup>49</sup>



FIGURE 7. Pierre-Gabriel Berthault after Jean-Louis Prieur, “Pillage de l’Hôtel de Castries. Fbg S<sup>t</sup>. Germain à Paris, le 13 Novembre 1790,” no. 46, from *Tableaux historique de la Révolution française ou Analyse des principaux événements qui ont eu lieu en France depuis la transformation des Etats-Généraux en Assemblée nationale, le 20 juin 1789*, Paris, 1791–1817. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

An unpublished compilation from the same period was Jean Louis Soulavie’s (1752–1813) private collection of images of modern French history, which concentrated sustained attention on the Revolution as part of a longer national history. The extension of the nation’s modern history into the present had already been adumbrated in print collections such as Fevret de Fontette’s, which brought the timeline of French history into that collector’s present, the reign of Louis XV. But those earlier compilations of prints of the past did not conceive of their subjects as a thematically or temporally coherent series, as “the age of —,” to the extent that collections of prints of the French Revolution did.

As a provincial cleric, Soulavie first occupied himself with theology and natural history before moving to Paris in 1778, when he began systematically to collect prints, drawings, and memoirs of French history. In effect, his study of geological time—his major work, *Histoire naturelle de la France méridionale* (Natural history of southern France; 1780–84), radically re-estimated the age of the earth and drew censure from the church for contradicting a literal reading of the Bible—evolved into an interest in historical time. Taking Fevret de Fontette’s collection of prints of modern French history as a model, he followed the same rigorously chronological method of organization and bookish presentation of the material, albeit in smaller albums, which necessitated trimming some prints. He amassed 152 volumes in *Monumens de l’histoire de France en estampes et dessins* (Monuments of the history of France in prints and drawings), which included 10 preliminary volumes on a variety of themes and 142 volumes on the history of France, spanning “the establishment of the Franks in Gaul to the foundation of the French empire in the house of Bonaparte.” He devoted 22 of those volumes to the French Revolution.<sup>50</sup> Like earlier historically minded collectors who found themselves living through times of particular

turbulence, Soulavie bought prints, drawings, brochures, and pamphlets as they came out in an effort to document the unfolding contemporary history of the Revolution.<sup>51</sup> The quality of the prints and drawings he acquired was mixed, since his primary aim was coverage of events. The concentration of his collection on this period was partly an effect of the great cataracts of printed material that began pouring off presses after 1789, when the number of presses increased. While a comprehensive history of engraving during the French Revolution has yet to be written, Jules Renouvier's classic study of the subject estimated that at least six thousand engraved subjects were produced between 1789 and 1799 by some 360 designated engravers.<sup>52</sup>

The density and the violence of the events pictured in Soulavie's revolutionary volumes spoke to his experience of the Revolution as the first event in history ever to significantly change society. He was an active participant, denounced as a Jacobin sympathizer and imprisoned after Thermidor, and later saved from deportation by Napoleon. The Bonapartist perspective in the introduction to his collection accepted the Revolution but condemned its excesses. His position was moderate compared with that of Henri Huchet, comte de la Bédoyère, a younger contemporary who collected antirevolutionary reportage and enlisted some of the same prints that Soulavie collected in support of his conflicting view.<sup>53</sup> Soulavie collected a good many drawings of revolutionary events, and for good reason, since that medium could respond more quickly to breaking "news" than burin engraving or even quicker intaglio techniques like etching and aquatint, which required separate processes of translation and printing (fig. 8).

Calling his twenty-two volumes on the Revolution a "monument," Soulavie wrote:

We have witnessed a destructive and bloody revolution. The artists have painted the maliciousness and ferocity of its factions. . . . It is from this point of view that this monument is of interest, for it shows terrible things that prose has not yet been able to describe.<sup>54</sup>

This observation by Soulavie extended Montfaucon's earlier characterization of images as "mute Histories" that contain information "which Authors do not mention," though it acquired urgency in the crucible of revolution.<sup>55</sup> As Soulavie saw it, artists provided visual evidence that historians would later have to take into account, since they fearlessly recorded atrocities from which writers recoiled:

We see partial writers denying or disguising authentic facts. This collection restores the rights of truth and history from all sides. The artist, a disinterested witness, paints, decides and observes what the faction wanted to dispute, or cover with clouds. And as the observing artist knows how to say in his own way what he has





FIGURE 8. *Massacre à la Salpêtrière, 3 Septembre 1792*. Pen, gray ink, and wash. Former Collection Rothschild, Paris. Photo: Thierry Le Mage, RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

seen and felt in a great event, without digressing and without writing, I wanted this voluminous work, the only one of its kind, to be the control and contestation, so to speak, of our written history, its safety and its embellishment.<sup>56</sup>

His assumptions that artists were “disinterested witness[es]” and that their images were truthful seem strange to us, though they were not uncharacteristic of his century. Although reflections on the reliability of images had long been made in the natural sciences, a Pyrrhonist skepticism of textual evidence persisted in some quarters and shifted faith away from texts to visual documents and artifacts as forms of historical evidence.<sup>57</sup> Soulavie’s assumption of the documentary neutrality of printed and drawn images of revolutionary events might be likened to the documentary status often accorded photographs and films today, even though we are aware that these are constructed, malleable images, just as certain conventions of textual and visual representation guided the execution of the drawings and prints in the eighteenth century. In any case, Soulavie’s experience of the French Revolution strengthened his belief in the ability of images to keep historians honest. His project privileged visual images as offering both a truer and more complete picture of history than written narrative on its own.

## Conclusion

An impulse to visualize history grew during the eighteenth century and crossed over from a documentary mode to heighten the historical ambience of imaginary scenes that recreated actions and events. These strands came together in the French Revolution, when the government called upon all artists to verify the still unfolding events of its history. In the eyes of a print collector like Soulavie, images of the Revolution could tell their own story and communicate better if they were liberated from the scaffolding of textual narrative. For him, they no longer supplemented written accounts of history, which was the role traditionally assigned to them even by “historophile” antiquarians and collectors, but bore the full weight of historical evidence and accountability. “Visual documents” can thus be seen as emerging triumphant from the century’s impulse to visualize history. However, this view of their privileged status vis-à-vis history was articulated by one man, and we simply do not know whether or how widely it was shared. We can only point to Napoleon’s subsequent unshakable belief that large-scale history paintings of events from his reign, publically exhibited, would be as persuasive and politically effective as thousands of words, though he hardly neglected narrative and museological forms of telling the nation’s history.

## Notes

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1. Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven, 1993).
2. *Ibid.*, 9.
3. Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Betty Radice (Harmondsworth, 1984), 143. See also Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 186–91.
4. Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier, *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2, *Le Livre triomphant, 1660–1830* (Paris, 1983), 93 and 376; Reinhard Wittmann, “Was There a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Amherst, MA, 1999), 284–12, esp. 301–3; and Guillaume Glorieux, *À l'Enseigne de Gersaint* (Seysel, 2002), 154.
5. *Adresse à l'Assemblée nationale, par les graveurs et propriétaires de planches gravées* (Paris, 1791); Patrick Michel, *Le Commerce du tableau à Paris dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2007); Stéphane Roy, “La gravure dans le rayonnement de la capitale: Paris et Londres au miroir,” in *À Paris sous la Révolution: nouvelles approches de la ville*, ed. Raymonde Monnier (Paris, 2008), 176–80; Glorieux, *À l'Enseigne de Gersaint*; and Anthony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking, 1550–1820* (London, 2016), 222; and Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680–1768* (New Haven, 1988).

6. Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography*, 23–24, 219–22; and Nina Dubin, “Master of the World: Art, Love, and the Culture of Credit” (unpublished manuscript).
7. Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville, “Lettre sur le choix & l’arrangement d’un Cabinet curieux, écrite par M. Des-Allier d’Argenville, Secrétaire du Roy en la Grande Chancellerie, à M. de Fougereux, Trésorier-Payeur des Rentes de l’Hôtel de Ville,” *Mercure de France* (June 1727): 1295–1329, esp. 1304–10. Dezallier’s letter was reprinted by Paul Lacroix in *Revue universelle des Arts* 28 (1864): 163–78.
8. Dezallier, “Lettre,” 1310.
9. *Ibid.*, 1314.
10. Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, rev. ed. (Paris, 1762). On his collection, see *1740, un abrégé du monde: savoirs et collections autour de Dezallier d’Argenville*, ed. Anne Lafont (Lyon, [2012]).
11. For a learned overview see Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography*, 436–45.
12. See Daniela Bleichmar, “Learning to Look: Visual Expertise Across Art and Science in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 1 (2012): 85–111.
13. On the separation of natural history from history that concerned itself with human affairs, see *Versions of History from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. Donald R. Kelley (New Haven, 1991), 5 and 370–438.
14. Bernard de Montfaucon, *Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, 5 vols. in 10 (Paris, 1719); and Bernard de Montfaucon, *Supplément au livre de L’antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1724). The English edition appeared soon afterwards with a narrow translation of the title as *Antiquity Explained and Represented in Sculptures*, 5 vols., trans. David Humphreys (London, 1721–25). Bernard de Montfaucon, *Les monumens de la monarchie françoise: qui comprennent l’histoire de France, avec les figures de chaque règne que l’injure des tems à épargnées . . .*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1729–33).
15. Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 131–32.
16. Bernard de Montfaucon, *The Supplement to Antiquity Explained, and represented in Sculptures, by the Learned Father Montfaucon*, 2 vols., trans. David Humphreys (London, 1725), 1:2 (my emphasis).
17. *Ibid.*; *Supplément au livre de L’antiquité expliquée*, 1: vj.
18. *Ibid.*
19. This triad of functions, long attributed to Thomas Aquinas, has been discussed by many scholars, among them Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford, 1972), 40–41; and Michael Baxandall, *The Lime-wood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven, 1980), 53.
20. Voltaire’s definition of “history” is translated in Kelley, *Versions of History*, 442, as an “account of things represented as true.” An alternative translation, as “a narrative of facts presented as true,” is given in *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert: Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. Jeremy Caradonna (Ann Arbor, 2006), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.088>. Originally published as “Histoire,” in *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1765), 8:220–25.
21. Montfaucon, *Supplement to Antiquity Explained*, 1:1; *Supplément au livre de L’antiquité expliquée*, 1: v.
22. See Bleichmar, “Learning to Look.”
23. Hugues-Adrien Joly, *Lettres à Karl-Heinrich von Heineken, 1772–1789* (Paris, 1988), 38–40.
24. The editions of Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s *Geschichte* are listed with abbreviated indications of their illustrations in Johann Joachim Winckelmann,



- Schriften und Nachlass*, ed. Adolf H. Borbein et al., vol. 4.1, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums. Text* (Mainz, 2002), xxiii–xxvi.
25. Charles Marie Fevret de Fontette bequeathed his collection of historical prints (40,000 pieces) to the Bibliothèque du roi in 1773; this formed the origin of the *Historie de France* du Cabinet series, called Qb1 after it was merged with other pieces. Other collections retained the names of their donors. The French editor and collector Michel Hennin (1777–1863) gave his collection to the Bibliothèque nationale in 1863; it is inventoried in *Inventaire de la collection d'estampes relatives à l'histoire de France, léguée en 1863 à la bibliothèque par Michel Hennin*, ed. Georges Duplessis, 5 vols. (Paris, 1877–84). The Belgian diplomat Baron Carl de Vinck de Deux-Orp (1859–1931) expanded a collection of prints inherited from his father, Baron Eugène de Vinck (1823–88), to form what he described as “Un Siècle d’histoire de France par l’estampe, 1770–1871” (42,000 pieces), which he bequeathed to the Bibliothèque nationale in 1906 and 1909; it is inventoried in *Collection de Vinck, Inventaire Analytique*, ed. François Louis Bruel et al., 8 vols. (Paris, 1909–68).
  26. Georges Duplessis, “Le Département des estampes de la Bibliothèque nationale pendant la période révolutionnaire, 1789–1804,” *Le Bibliophile Français* 6 (1872): 175–213, esp. 178.
  27. Jean Pierre Imbert Châtre [or Chastre], Sr de Cangé, *Estampes du Roy Henry IV, recueillies par J. P.G. Châtre, Sr de Cangé* (n.p., 1726), BnF Est., Res LB35-23. See also Jean Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” *Nouvelles de l’estampe*, no. 37 (Jan.–Feb. 1978): 11–12.
  28. On print collectors who specialized in portraits, see Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” and Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography*, 437–38. For a case study, see Randall Meissen’s essay in this issue. On portraits as visualizations of the past, see Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 26–79; and Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, trans. Martha M. Houle (Minneapolis, 1988).
  29. Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” 11; and Jean Adhémar, “L’Enseignement par l’image,” *Gazette des beaux-arts* 97 (1981): 57–58. Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert’s encyclopedia also made extensive use of images to instruct its readers.
  30. On Charles-Marie Fevret de Fontette, see Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” 12; Vanessa Selbach, “Restauration des volumes folio de la série sur l’histoire de France Qb-1: la collection d’estampes historiques de Fevret de Fontette,” *Ad vivum: L’estampe et le dessin anciens a la BnF*, OpenEdition, posted April 12, 2012, <http://estampe.hypotheses.org/296>; and Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 159.
  31. Fevret de Fontette expanded the standard bibliography of French history, Père Lelong’s *Bibliothèque historique de la France* (1719), from one to four volumes between 1768 and 1778. The second appendix to the fourth volume, *Détail d’un recueil d’estampes, desseins, etc. représentant une suite des événements de l’histoire de France, à commencer depuis les Gaulois, jusques et y compris le règne de Louis XV*, is an inventory of his collection of prints.
  32. See Selbach, “Restauration des volumes.”
  33. Charles Rollin, *Histoire ancienne des Égyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Mèdes et des Perses, des Macédoniens, des Grecs* (Paris, 1740), 1:101. First published in 1731–38 in 13 volumes, the book ran through four editions by 1778. See Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children’s Literature*, vol. 1, 1660–1830 (New York, 2008), 88 and 100; and Martin and Chartier, *Histoire de l’édition française*, 2:185 and 376.

34. *Comptes de Louis XVI publiés par le comte de Beauchamp d'après le manuscrit autographe du Roi conservé aux Archives nationales* (Paris, 1909); this document is apparently a copy of the official *Etat de la maison du Roy*, dated 1 July 1776, noting a payment of 400 livres to Lebas for unspecified work. Lebas signed many vignettes “J. P. LeBas in. et sculp.” though was not identified as their author in the Rollin volumes.
35. Titus Livius (Livy), *The History of Rome*, 30:29.8–31.9, in Livy, *History of Rome with an English Translation in Fourteen Volumes*, trans. F. G. Moore (Cambridge, MA, 1949).
36. Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 204.
37. The term “mirroring” comes from Michel de Certeau’s discussion of relations between speech, writing, and reading as summarized by Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, 1994), 17–19. On David’s devising of the subjects, see Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, 1985), 211–13 and 247–50.
38. The value of eyewitness accounts had long been recognized by classical historians. It was also hugely important in early modern science and travel narratives, including written and visual descriptions of the New World, as many scholars have noted; see, for example, *Histories of Scientific Observation*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Elizabeth Lunbeck (Chicago, 2011). For historical claims made by publishers of prints of contemporary customs and costumes, see [Johann Heinrich Eberts], “Discours Préliminaire,” in *Première Suite d’estampes pour servir à l’histoire des mœurs et du costume des Français dans le dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1775), 2; and [Guillaume François Roger Molé], “Introduction au première volume de la Galerie des Modes Françaises,” in *Galerie des modes et costumes Français, dessinés d’après nature, gravés par les plus célèbres artistes en ce genre et colorés avec le plus grand soin par Madame Lebeau . . .* (Paris, 1778), iij. The history of private life was not, however, formulated as a field of study until the end of the nineteenth century.
39. See Susan L. Siegfried, “Salon and Early Republican Experiments in State Patronage,” in *The Paris Fine Art Salon/Le Salon, 1791–1881*, ed. James Kearns and Alistair Mill (Oxford, 2015), 47–72; and Susan L. Siegfried, “Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France,” *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (1993): 235–58.
40. *Description des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure, exposés au Sallon du Louvre, par les artistes composans la Commune-générale des arts, le 10 Août 1793, l’an 2 de la République Française, une & indivisible* (Paris, [1793]), 54, cat. no. 541.
41. Quoted in Claudette Hould, *Images of the French Revolution* (Quebec, 1989), 175.
42. *Ibid.*
43. William Olander, *Pour transmettre à la postérité: French Painting and Revolution, 1774–1795* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 1:121.
44. *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure, dessins, modèles, &c. exposés dans le Grand Sallon du Museum, au Louvre, par les Artistes de la France, sur l’invitation de la Commission exécutive de l’Instruction publique, au mois Vendémiaire, an quatrième de la République Française* (Paris, [1795]), 60, cat. no. 484. On the painting and print see Olander, *Pour transmettre*, 1:279–80; and *Aux Armes & aux Arts! Les Arts de la Révolution, 1789–1799*, ed. Philippe Bordes and Régis Michel (Paris, 1988), 59.
45. Quoted in Hould, *Images of the French Revolution*, 86.
46. *Ibid.*, 86–89; *La Révolution par la gravure: les tableaux historiques de la révolution française, une entreprise éditoriale d’information et sa diffusion en Europe, 1791–1817*, ed. Claudette Hould (Paris, 2002); and *La Révolution par l’écriture: les Tableaux de*

- la Révolution française, une entreprise éditoriale d'information (1791–1817)*, ed. Claudette Hould (Paris, 2005).
47. Quoted in Hould, *Images of the French Revolution*, 86.
  48. *Ibid.*, 79, 86.
  49. Marcel Roux, *Inventaire du Fonds français. Graveurs du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993), 2:391, quoted in Hould, *Images of the French Revolution*, 86.
  50. On Soulavie, see Albin Mazon, *Histoire de Soulavie (naturaliste, diplomate, historien)*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1893); Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” 13; Pierrette Jean-Richard and Gilbert Mondin, *Un collectionneur pendant la Révolution: Jean Louis Soulavie (1752–1813)* (Paris, 1989), 5–6; quotation, 5; and Christina Aube, “The Lost Volumes of Jean-Louis Soulavie’s *Monumens de l’histoire de France en estampes et dessins*,” *Getty Research Journal* 9 (2017): 191–200. Soulavie’s collection, which was broken up and dispersed, partially survives in the Edmond de Rothschild Collection, Musée du Louvre; the Carl de Vinck de Deux-Orp Collection of historical prints in the Bibliothèque nationale de France; and the Getty Research Institute.
  51. Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography*, 439–40.
  52. Hould, *Images of the French Revolution*, 63; and Jules Renouvier, *Histoire de l’art pendant la Révolution considéré principalement dans les estampes* (Paris, 1863).
  53. Adhémar, “Le public de l’estampe,” 13.
  54. J[ean] L[ouis] Soulavie l’aîné, “De l’Histoire écrite, et de l’histoire monumentale, conservée par les arts; et des secours que le dessin et la gravure prêtent à l’histoire,” in *Pièces inédites sur les règnes de Louis XIV, Louis XV et Louis XVI...* (Paris, 1809), 2:435–36.
  55. Bernard de Montfaucon, *Antiquity Explained*, I, s.p. [p. 5]; *Antiquité expliquée*, 1: x.
  56. Soulavie, “De l’Histoire écrite,” 435.
  57. On Pyrrhonism, see Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315, esp. 295–98. On the truthfulness of images in the early modern period, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994); Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York, 2007); and Sachiko Kusukawa, *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago, 2012).