

Books

Le Salon de 1827. Classique ou romantique? By Eva Bouillo. Preface by Ségalen le Men. 324 pp. incl. 62 col. + 113 b. & w. ills. (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2009), €23. ISBN 978-2-7535-0782-1.

Reviewed by PETER COOKE

THIS SCRUPULOUSLY DOCUMENTED book, based on a doctoral thesis, is a useful addition to such major socio-historical studies of the art of Restoration France as Richard Wrigley's *The Origins of French Art Criticism, from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration* (Oxford, 1993), Beth Wright's *Painting and History During the French Restoration* (Cambridge, 1997) and Marie-Claude Chaudonneret's *L'Etat et les artistes de la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet 1815-1833* (Paris, 1999). Unlike the aforementioned works, however, Eva Bouillo focuses on a single, particularly significant moment, the Salon of 1827. Her aims are clearly stated: 'To show the role of this Salon, to analyse the way in which the new painting was established there, to analyse its evolution since 1824 and to determine what was new about Romanticism' (p.12). To achieve these objectives the author has employed an impressive array of material, including unpublished archival documents, statistical studies and Salon criticism. She has also made good use of secondary sources, although the bibliography is marred by a few omissions of relevant publications in English.

The importance of the Salon for artistic life in nineteenth-century France has long been recognised: it was, in the words of Delacroix, 'le champ de bataille des artistes'.¹ As Bouillo has emphasised, the metaphor of battle was widely used by critics discussing the Salon of 1827, which pitted *classiques* against *romantiques*, *homériques* against *shakepeariens* and provoked a major polemic in the French press. It is the importance of this confrontation that justifies

the detailed study undertaken by the author. As a young painter, Charles-Philippe La Rivière, recognised at the time: 'La peinture se trouve maintenant dans une crise terrible' (p.139). Young artists felt obliged to choose between 'la manière du grand Delacroix' and 'celle du froid J.-L. David' (*ibid.*). Even more than the Salon of 1824 (studied long ago by Dorothea Beard),² the Salon of 1827 was a watershed in nineteenth-century art. Bouillo has shown conclusively that it was in 1827 that Romantic painting gained critical and official recognition. Vilified by the conservatives, the new painting was nevertheless welcomed by others who recognised it – with its liberal values of truth, freedom and originality – as a refreshing force for aesthetic renewal in the face of a tired Neo-classicism. The relevance of the book thus extends far beyond the year 1827, not only because of the seminal importance of that Salon, but also because Bouillo's examination of the mechanisms and politics of State patronage illumines the Restoration as a whole. Moreover, she shows how the reforms initiated by Auguste de Forbin, the highly influential Directeur des Musées, created the model for later nineteenth-century Salon exhibitions. Forbin plays a central role in this study, emerging as a key figure in the rise of Romantic art in France: he fomented the new painting by exhibiting major polemical Romantic pictures in the prestigious Salon Carré in the third hanging and by rewarding some of the less controversial Romantic painters with medals, commissions and official honours. Indeed, Bouillo shows how important the more palatable, conciliatory style of the so-called *petits maîtres* was in establishing Romantic art in France.

One of the merits of the book is its illustration of a number of little-known works such as Charles Steuben's *Scene from the youth of Peter the Great* (Fig.58) or François-Émile de Lansac's *Episode from the Siego of Missolonghi*. However, many of the colour plates are of mediocre or poor quality: Alexandre-Marie Colin's striking picture *The three witches from 'Macbeth'*, for example, is reproduced as a horrible yellow thing, while the illustration of Camille Roqueplan's *Death of the spy Morris* is

grey, blurred and pixel-ridden. While the book is generally even-handed, a long digression on the sources of Delacroix's *The death of Sardanapalus* (pp.210-11), drawing on secondary material, sacrifices needlessly to 'big name' art history. Likewise, some of Delacroix's minor pictures, not discussed in the press of the time, are illustrated in colour, at the expense, one presumes, of more important paintings by less well-known artists. All in all, though, this is a very well-substantiated book which casts new light on the Restoration art world and on the rise of Romantic painting.

¹ E. Delacroix: *Correspondance générale*, ed. A. Joubin, Paris 1937, III, p.8.

² D. Beard: 'The Salon of 1824: the Emergence of the Conflict Between the Old School and the New', unpublished Ph.D. diss. (Ohio State University, Columbus, 1966).

Eugène Delacroix: Journal. Edited by Michèle Hannoosh. 2 vols. 2519 pp. (José Corti, Paris, 2009), €80. ISBN 978-2-7143-0999-0.

Reviewed by JON WHITELEY

DELACROIX DID NOT write his *Journal* for publication. While the later years contain many passages on art that he hoped to publish one day in a *Dictionnaire des Beaux-Arts*, these are thrown together with other things that he wanted to remember: lists of addresses, long excerpts from the books he was reading and records of dinner parties and conversations. The improvised character of the *Journal* is part of its charm but it is the range of Delacroix's intelligence and the quality of the writing that make it such compulsive reading. The importance of the manuscript was recognised by Delacroix's contemporaries, including Jenny Le Guillou, his loyal servant, who gave it to his friend Constant Dutilleux instead of handing it over to his residuary heir, Achille Piron, whom she evidently did not trust. Jenny's well-intentioned act began a complicated history of competing claims, which ended with the dismemberment of the *Journal* and the loss of several volumes. It was finally published in 1893-95, edited by Paul Flat and René Piot, but with many errors and omissions. This first edition was superseded in 1932 by André Joubin's revised version, which has become the standard work as well as the basis of several later editions and translations. Joubin's task was not an easy one. Delacroix's handwriting is sometimes illegible and large parts of the original manuscript had disappeared by the early 1930s. The volumes for 1851-54 and 1863 are now known only through copies made by Alfred Robaut, who transcribed the entire *Journal* for publication at the request of Dutilleux. It was Robaut's copy which was the basis of the first published version. Flat claimed to have checked this against the original manuscript, although his checking does not seem to have been very thorough. In the introduction to the

58. *Scene from the youth of Peter the Great*, by Charles Steuben. 1827. Canvas, 400 by 420 cm. (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes).



1932 edition, Joubin mercilessly criticised both Robaut and Flat for the many omissions and misreadings which came to light when he compared Flat's text with the parts of the original manuscript, which had been recently acquired by the Bibliothèque d'Art in Paris. However, Michèle Hannoosh, who has now re-edited and revised the *Journal* from end to end, points out that Joubin himself committed many similar errors when transcribing and editing the manuscripts. Where Joubin reads 'Rubens', Hannoosh reads 'Racine'; where Joubin reads 'Rossini', Hannoosh reads 'Raffet'; where Joubin transcribes a sentence in English: 'I was particularly fond of this pretty scenery', Hannoosh alters 'scenery' into 'Demery', i.e. Mlle Démeri, a singer who caught Delacroix's eye at the Théâtre Italien. Her fellow singer, Luigi Mari, is transformed by Joubin into the husband (*mar*) of Esther Mombelli and the opera in which they appeared is written 'Ricciardi' by Joubin (probably without realising that this was the title of an opera) and 'Ricciardo' by Hannoosh (who identifies the opera and the production seen by Delacroix). 'La Dames des Italiens' who visited Delacroix earlier in the day and who appears several times in the *Journal* in 1822 and 1823 is identified by Joubin (for no clear reason) as Mme de Conflans, but is more plausibly identified by Hannoosh as Soulier's friend, Mme de Pron. There are many hundreds of changes of this kind, too many for Hannoosh to point out on every occasion.

The history of the new edition dates from 1991 when Hannoosh began work on her valuable study of the *Journal*, published in 1995 as *Painting and the Journal of Eugène Delacroix*. While comparing Flat's text with a part of Robaut's copy, now in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Hannoosh noticed that in many respects Robaut's manuscript corresponded more accurately to the original manuscript than did Flat's text. Subsequently, while consulting Moreau-Nélaton's copy of the Flat edition, she noted that the owner had made many corrections in the book on the basis of a 'copie Robaut' which, however, did not correspond to the copy in the Getty. She concludes that there were, at one time, two copies made by Robaut, one partly transcribed by Moreau-Nélaton into his copy of the Flat edition and the other now preserved in part in the Getty. Both are used by Hannoosh to correct Joubin who, despite his criticism of Flat, tended to follow his edition, *faute de mieux*, when publishing the texts of the missing years.

Although the lost volumes have not turned up, Hannoosh has discovered a wealth of hitherto unknown documents and correspondence in the hands of the heirs of Achille Piron. Prompted by the late Lee Johnson, she added a smaller cache of Piron archives from a collection of papers, acquired by Claude Roger-Marx in 1962–63, which had become separated at some date from those which still belonged to Piron's descendants. Hannoosh, in collaboration with Johnson, has already published a volume of letters by Delacroix from these two sources in 2000 (*Nouvelles Lettres*) and she has now published the remaining

writings in an extensive supplement inserted at the end of the *Journal*.

In compiling his edition, Joubin had already realised that many of Delacroix's *camets* and stray notes had been written as an adjunct to the *Journal* and included those which were then known to him in his third volume. Hannoosh goes further, arguing that Delacroix's *Journal* should not be read as a conventional chronological diary but as a new type of literature in which parts are copied from earlier entries or inserted retrospectively and notes and *camets* are employed in parallel as a source to which the *Journal* can refer. Whether or not Delacroix made a conscious decision to adopt this format, Hannoosh is very persuasive in her analysis of the formal and philosophical structure of the *Journal* and in her suggestion of a link between the idea of the projected Dictionary and Delacroix's preference for an open, fragmented text over a more complete but artificial form. Her reconstruction of the process of writing the *Journal* has given her the key to the many puzzling anomalies in the dates on entries which are not, as has always been thought, dates of the entries but the dates of the agendas from which the entries have been copied. Flat, in particular, and Joubin, to some extent, ironed out the irregularities and removed many of the inserts. This made their books more readable but less reliable. Hannoosh has squared the circle by restoring the text as Delacroix left it while including all the variants and corrections in a long appendix. Few will read the appendix in its entirety, but it is there when it is wanted and is a valuable addition.

Joubin's eighty-year reign has come to an end. The footnotes and references which have previously cited 'Joubin' will now cite 'Hannoosh'. Even if this were not the case, the additional material in the new edition, which includes a previously unpublished excerpt from the *Journal* of Pierre Andrieu, substantial new documents written by Delacroix describing his trip to North Africa and much else, would have made this book essential reading for all scholars of Delacroix. In eighty years from now, this will still be the standard text. It is a pity Hannoosh's publishers do not seem to have taken account of this. The box and paper covers – unlike the contents – have not been made to stand the test of time and those who buy the new edition – libraries, in particular – should have it immediately rebound.

In addition to the primary text, Hannoosh has included a large apparatus of footnotes and commentary as well as a useful biographical index which contains much new information about the people in Delacroix's world. Little is missed out and it is difficult to spot lapses. The following comments relate to a few of the many thousands of brisk and informative footnotes.

p.83, notes 27 and 28: the story of the doctor appears in Louis Sallentin's *L'Improvisateur français*, a dictionary of anecdotes published serially in the early 1800s. Sallentin does not attribute the quip to Boerhave, but the likelihood that this was Delacroix's source is strengthened by the anecdote of the candle which follows this in the *Journal*. This also appears in Sallentin's dictionary where the 'homme célèbre' is identified as

Charles V. As Hannoosh notes, the story is also told about Turenne.

p.87, note 48: the exhibition visited by Delacroix and his friends was not the Salon but an exhibition of works which had won prizes at the Ecole held in conjunction with the prize-giving ceremony which Delacroix attended later in the day. The composition which repelled him was not *Egishte croyant retrouver le cadavre d'Oreste*, with which Debay won the Prix de Rome in 1823, but *Oreste et Pylades investis par les bergers*, which was awarded a Second Grand Prix in 1822 and is now lost. The second painting mentioned by Delacroix was the work with which Debay won the Prix de Torse.

p.101, note 33: 'l'ami Sanson', if he were an artist, could, conceivably, be Jules Sanson, who exhibited at the Salon and in the provinces in the 1830s.

p.109, note 109: as Josette Bottineau has pointed out (*La Revue du Louvre* 3 (1993), p.50), the exhibition at which Delacroix saw *Marcus Sextus* was a selling exhibition which opened five days earlier at 7 rue Caumartin. This was composed of paintings, mainly Italian, from the collection of Lucien Bonaparte.

p.348, note 130: Hannoosh silently alters Joubin's suggestion that the 'Henry' to whom Delacroix wrote a letter cancelling an appointment was an unknown collaborator of the artist and identifies him as Henry Pierret, Jean-Baptiste's son. The unpublished letter which Delacroix mentions here, addressed to Henry Pierret, was bequeathed to the Ashmolean in 2009.

p.472, note 317: almost every eye-witness account of Chopin's funeral gives a different list of pall bearers: of the seven names frequently suggested, two might have been conductors: Meyerbeer, in his diary, lists himself, Adam Czartoryski, Delacroix and Pleyel. As one of the pall-bearers, he is probably to be trusted. Everyone mentions Delacroix.

p.717, note 382: the subject of the unknown *Satyre dans les filets* may have been taken from Gessner's idyll *L'Amour mal récompensé*.

p.913, note 226: this is not François Charles Caumartin who fought at Waterloo but the lawyer Edouard Caumartin who killed a rival in a quarrel over an opera singer in 1843. His trial at which he was acquitted of murder became a *cause célèbre*. This is surely the 'cruelle aventure' to which Delacroix refers.

p.999, note 159: 'Thibaudeau' probably refers to the collector of old-master drawings and editor of *Le National*, Adolphe Thibaudeau, whose father, Antoine-Clair, comte Thibaudeau, had succeeded Delacroix's father as prefect in the Bouches-du-Rhône. Thibaudeau had been assistant secretary to the commission for the World Fair the previous year when Delacroix served on the commission for the section of fine arts. He died on 7th December 1856, a little over six months after this entry in the *Journal*.

p.1377, note 4: possibly Eugène Berthoud, author of *Un Baiser mortel* and other stories.

p.1429, note 13: this is the first stanza of the poem 'Le Rendez-vous' from Auguste Moufle's *Poésies diverses*, published in 1818.

p.1582, note 230: these extracts are from Willem Hendrik Nieupoort's *Explication abrégée des coutumes et cérémonies observées chez les Romains*, translated from the original Latin and published in 1790.

p.1677, note 15: 'l'histoire de la glace' refers to an anecdote about a servant who tried to acquire some ice for his master's champagne from a neighbour by pretending that it was for Alexandre Dumas. The deceit was unmasked when he offered to pay for the ice as it was well known that Dumas never paid for anything. The story appears in Eugène de Mirecourt's *Les contemporains* published in 1856, too late to be a source for this reference but it was doubtless current earlier.

p.1839, note 86: the Turkish proverb cited here was fairly common in nineteenth-century France: too common, perhaps, to identify a source. As the context suggests, the moral of the proverb is *festina lente*.