

French Graduate Research in Art History and Archaeology: An Introductory Appreciation for America, Librarians, Students, and Researchers

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Graduate research represents a unique window into disciplines and their respective research agendas as well as the sustained efforts of advanced students. Often theses and dissertations not only offer new information and knowledge, but they represent the latest trends in research, methodologies, and techniques. Moreover, they offer the librarian and researcher valuable indicators of research strengths and future scholarly direction. With this in mind, each discipline's efforts in acculturating students into disciplinary culture and its research philosophies, further inculcates research interest and leaves in tangible form theses and dissertations. This grey literature is often difficult to find and often does not find the light of publication. However, graduate theses and dissertations are the most genuine indicators of a discipline's core values when research becomes the penultimate evaluation for advanced students (Buchanan and Hérubel, 1995). Additionally, this grey literature remains a rich accumulation of knowledge verified and vetted by disciplinary faculty who train and educate advanced students into the core values and protocols governing a discipline's intrinsic acculturative principles governing knowledge.

Graduate education in art history follows its own disciplinary cultural practices and emphasizes research at the graduate level, especially at the master's and doctoral degree level. It goes without question that art historical scholarship is strongly emphasized in graduate programs where specialization occurs and theses and dissertations offer capstone research experiences to advanced students who wish to enter various fields where advanced and formally trained art historical research are desirable. So it is with the French art historical discipline. French art history programs have a rich heritage producing research at a very high level for a country that has fewer programs than North American universities (Therrien, L. and Monnier, G., 1998; Hérubel, 2007). Art historians and

archaeologists researching international art historical literature often find reference to French intermediate graduate theses and doctoral dissertations, without a sense of what this grey literature means or comprises (Hérubel, 2008; Rutledge, 1994). This study addresses such concerns with a preliminary examination of this grey literature.

Researchers' intent on examining art historical research need to understand degree nomenclature and the various specializations produced in French universities and institutes charged with graduate education and research in art history. For non-French art historians and librarians working with art history collections, knowledge however cursory, of French graduate art history in general and specialized terms can be invaluable. For this reason, this study attempts to offer the first preliminary examination of French graduate art historical research as produced in French institutions of higher education.

A preliminary bibliometric profile of French graduate research for 2000-2007 offers an interesting recent profile of graduate specialization, research trends, and institutional affiliations. Librarians and researchers have benefited by the development of an online database which gathers graduate level research culminating in intermediate and doctoral research projects. This database contains penultimate graduate research for degrees granted 200-2007. Regularly augmented, it is housed in the bibliographic system hosted by *INHA*, *L'Institut national d'histoire de l'art* based in Paris, the National Institute for Art History in Paris, France. Although not retrospective, it promises to continue enhancing the database's range as it continues to improve functionality and coverage. As is the case in France, archaeology and art history can be combined within departments, depending upon whether archaeology is an integral part of the area studied, e.g., ancient Egyptian art, or classical

art, or medieval art where archaeological analysis and perspectives contribute to understanding those periods.

French Universities, Art History, and Graduate Studies

Since the founding of the first universities in medieval Europe, French universities have continued to evolve and produce graduate research (de Ridder-Symoens, H., ed., 1992). Especially since the institutionalization of disciplines, i.e. art history, history, geography, and literature in the latter 19th century, French higher education has continued to produce advanced research oriented scholarship. Art history has evolved within French institutions of higher education, both within universities and within such tertiary institutions as the Ecole de Louvre, or the Ecole des Chartes--the first trains students in art history and curatorship and the latter is chiefly responsible for the training of archivists and historians, as well as art historians. Both contribute to the corpus of scholarly activity pertaining to the fine arts in general and art history in particular. Additionally, in France archaeology may be nestled within art history departments. Often archaeology will exclude the more anthropological and ethnographically oriented archaeology as practiced in North America. Here Egyptology, Assyriology, Medieval Archaeology, or Sinology and its more material culture based studies reflect the more art historically oriented interests. However, interests attendant to prehistoric archaeology, including settlement studies, or metallurgical practices are intellectually situated within prehistory and its ethnological perspectives.

French art history represents a topography of various specializations, replete with diverse approaches, philosophical interests and prerogatives, as well as methodological and technical innovation and practice. To be certain, as a discipline, French art history is more diverse in its practice, reflecting an equally diverse and richly textured intellectual landscape which can be mapped for its disciplinary research characteristics. As art history has evolved, incorporating new approaches, and testing new critical techniques from literary studies to anthropological readings of art, both aboriginal and contemporary, it has explored well-worn subjects, i.e. iconographic research in Medieval or Renaissance painting to Internet art and its phenomenological aspects. Everywhere art historical practice has exploded into social and political history, economic studies of historical art markets, to incorporating sociological

theories of taste, nowhere more so than within the French academy. For this reason, and especially for researchers unfamiliar with French graduate art history research, it is instructive to examine French graduate theses and dissertations and the specializations they represent.

French graduate studies pose several problems for North American researchers and librarians unfamiliar with French university degree structures. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon version of graduate degrees, i.e. masters (usually the M.A.) and doctoral, (usually the Ph.D.) such uniformity does not exist in the French context. French higher education has undergone several periods of reform with corresponding changes in degrees, especially changes in nomenclature. For purposes of this study, the most important reform is that pertaining to the doctorate. Prior to the reform of 1984, there existed three distinctive doctoral degrees, each requiring different intellectual demands and results for very specific purposes. These doctorates were research oriented and were considered different, but contributory to a discipline's research base (Hérubel, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2007):

Types of French Doctoral Degrees

doctorat d'université--Established in 1897 for all disciplines; for both French & foreign students [principle population]; most diverse in quality and duration of studies; did not confer any professional status in France; ambiguous and least prestigious; dissertation range & strength is only guarantor of quality. Very oriented to autodidactic research and useful to the sciences.

doctorat de 3^{ième} cycle--Established in 1954 for sciences & in 1958 for humanities, social sciences; three year long research technique oriented, with dissertation in very narrow subject within a discipline; indication of pursuing research techniques.; qualifies for beginning research or university post. Primary professional doctoral qualification for university teaching at entry level prior to 1984.

doctorat d'état--Established in 1810, representing the highest research contribution in all fields; 10-20 years (not unusual) of preparation ending in massive *chef d'oeuvre*; necessary for full professorship; most prestigious doctorate. Upon special examination, could be granted for a corpus of published research over a span of time.

doctorat nouveau régime--Established in 1984 for all disciplines; 3-5 years in duration; equivalent to and modeled on the American Ph.D.

habilitation à diriger les recherches--Established in 1984; no time constraint; open to holders of the *doctorat d'Etat* or *doctorat nouveau régime*; higher order representing major critical accomplishment in field; by dissertation, or collection of articles, books, etc; required for and confers full professorial status.

In 1984, the *doctorat d'université*, *doctorat de 3ième cycle*, and the *doctorat d'état* were abolished in favor of uniformity and in emulation of the North American Ph.D.; replacing the former doctorates were the *doctorat nouveau régime* and the *habilitation à diriger les recherches*. The latter doctorates now represent the highest doctorates attainable in the current system, with the *habilitation à diriger les recherches* representing what the *doctorat d'état* formally represented. Until only recently, intermediate graduate degrees and program were relatively stable after the reforms of 1968, when French universities underwent massive realignment and inaugurated the present system of intermediate degrees for the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Until recently, French master's degrees were of several types in:

- *Maîtrise*—academic tract, one year and thesis, approx. 75-400 pp.
- *DEA*—academic tract, one year beyond maîtrise, approx. 75-400pp.

Maîtrise, *DEA*, or indicating higher and different levels of research achievement. The *Maîtrise* is the first graduate degree in a discipline and must be obtained prior to enrolling in the advanced and more research demanding *DEA*, which represents the beginning phases of dissertations work. The LMD system now indicates the *licence* degree is an undergraduate degree, and the *master I (Maîtrise)* and *master II (DEA)*, essentially mirroring the older system of graduate level degrees with penultimate research required; as with the former *doctorat d'état*, the *habilitation à diriger les recherches* may be earned for a single dissertation or a corpus of published research, when defended before a jury. Today, with European Union reform and attempts at rationalizing the different national diploma structures, these older French master's

degrees are abolished since 2004 and starting with 2005-2006 French universities and higher education institutes only offer the degree of *master* (English spelling used by French), indicating the change. This sample includes older degree designations; but as researchers examine post 2004 theses, the latter nomenclature becomes essential. Essentially, the changes are more indicative of changes in nomenclature than substance.

Methodology

For purposes of this study, a bibliometric analysis of theses and dissertations in art history and archaeology defended and accepted for 2000-2007 were tabulated from the website (<http://www.inha.fr/spip.php?rubrique199>) appearing in the annual compilations under the sponsorship of the national art historical institution named *INHA, L'Institut national d'histoire de l'art* based in Paris. The following rubrics in translation represent the major areas of art historical graduate research:

Prehistory and Protohistory
Art & archaeology of Ancient Egypt
Art & archaeology of Ancient Near East
Art & archaeology of Ancient Greece
Art & archaeology of Ancient Rome
Art & archaeology of Gaulle & the Celtic World
Art & archaeology of the Byzantine World
Art & archaeology of the Islamic World
Art & archaeology of the Western Middle Ages
Art of the Renaissance and Early Modern Times (XV-XVIII)
Art of the XIX Century
Art of the XX & XXI Centuries
Archaeology & Ethnology of the Modern and Contemporary World
Art & archaeology of the Far East & India
Art & archaeology of Oceania, the Americas & Africa
Techniques, Scientific Analysis & Restoration
Monumental Patrimony, Preservation & Restoration
Museology & the Study of Public & Private Collections
History Institutions and of Education
Critique and Reception

Only those appearing in these official institutional listings were used and examined for type of year, degree, specialization, and institutional affiliation. Triage of data included identifying major areas of specialization and

noting institutional loci of specialization. Major institutional centers of graduate research were noted and later examined for specialization as an indicator of institutional affiliation. Although beyond this study's purview, subject orientation was noted for additional discussion and as an indicator of possible further examination.

General Findings and Discussion

The samples for 2000-2007 yielded 10,441 theses and dissertations (hereafter referred to as research memoirs). Upon examination key characteristics emerged producing an intellectual and institutional topography of art historical research in France (See Table I.)

Table I: Production of Penultimate Graduate Diploma Research

Area	Maîtrise + Master I	DEA + Master II	Doctoral thesis	Habilitation	Total	%
Prehistory and Protohistory	315	173	50	2	538	5.2
Art & archaeology of Ancient Egypt	171	107	16	1	294	2.8
Art & archaeology of Ancient Near East	123	81	26	0	230	2.2
Art & archaeology of Ancient Greece	167	100	42	3	309	2.9
Art & archaeology of Ancient Rome	190	106	48	3	344	3.3
Art & archaeology of Gaulle & the Celtic World	183	99	28	1	310	2.9
Art & archaeology of the Byzantine World	54	52	28	0	134	1.3
Art & archaeology of the Islamic World	72	68	26	2	166	1.6
Art & archaeology of the Western Middle Ages	785	327	81	8	1,193	11.4
Art of the Renaissance and Early Modern Times (XV-XVIII)	776	409	138	12	1,323	12.7
Art of the XIX Century	597	315	105	3	1,017	9.7
Art of the XX & XXI Centuries	1,532	739	188	0	2,459	23.6
Archaeology & Ethnology of the Modern and Contemporary World	52	23	8	2	83	.07
Art & archaeology of the Far East & India	123	70	25	3	218	2.1
Art & archaeology of Oceania, the Americas & Africa	142	88	44	2	274	2.6
Techniques, Scientific Analysis & Restoration	93	41	17	4	151	1.4
Monumental Patrimony, Preservation & Restoration	209	93	34	1	336	3.2
Museology & the Study of Public & Private Collections	463	165	28	0	656	6.3
History Institutions and of Education	71	34	15	0	120	1.1
Critique and Reception	163	89	34	2	286	2.7

As examination of the data revealed major configurations of research activity, as well as the nature of art historical graduate research as an institutional condition of French academia emerged. Essentially, an institutional sociology of knowledge of activity situates the French art historical discipline as a product of French university and academic culture. Among the findings are areas of research concentration, indicating levels of expertise and research contribution. Four areas emerge as primary loci of activity, Art & archaeology of the Western Middle Ages (11.4%), Art of the Renaissance and Early Modern Times (XV-XVIII) (12.7%), Art of the XIX Century (9.7%), and Art of the XX & XXI Centuries (23.6%), with the later as the major concentration. These areas represent the major core interest in art history, and reflect a wealth of information useful to art librarians and art history researchers alike. Those periods and areas that include archaeology perforce treat all areas of research that fall within the purview of archaeological analysis and perspective. Unlike art history proper rubrics, these areas entertain combinations of archaeology and art history or separate them as necessary per subject or methodological technique. Fields such as 20th century, offer an increasingly wide range of subjects under consideration—from photography, to architecture, to political conditions of artistic movements, to biographical studies, or in-depth analysis' of museum collections or issues of market place or patronage. Moreover, that latter periods including the 19th century, examine iconographic and pre-iconographic approaches to genres, individual, and other mainstays of art historical examination. Biographical studies especially, those considering emerging theoretical innovations, offer insight into the creative process. As French art history has increasingly incorporated perspectives and methodologies from various disciplines, its parameters have effectively embraced a growing repertoire of approaches and schools of thought.

Among the characteristics defining the history of art in France is the position held by archaeology and museology, and criticism and reception studies. Although not generally considered within the intellectual methodological purview of art historians, archaeology is tied to those areas of specialization or periods that require archaeological investigation to better ascertain the total experience of built culture, i.e. architecture, as well as all aspects of the

history of art. Moreover, archaeology is seen as integrative and capable of utilizing various approaches and techniques which can be useful to art historians proper—yet, it should be understood that archaeology remains a stand-alone discipline, joined to specific periods and civilizations. Museological studies are central to the framing of art within collections, and necessary to foundational suites treating taste, connoisseurship, among other aspects of society and art. Both private and public collections, whether in museums, or private collections, this aspect of art history continues to be of critical interest. Complementing these areas, criticism and reception studies examine the role of criticism in art, including the art market, collecting principles, aesthetics, as well as the purpose of art itself. Reception studies tend to explore the transfer of taste, the market for art, diffusion of art, as well as the collection of art originating in different cultural venues.

Graduate degree research represents different levels of sophistication and contribution. The master I and master II require original research and the evidence of conceptualization culminating with a project that is contributory to discovery of knowledge or a contribution to a re-conceptualization of research undertaken. The master II research project is a necessary primary stage in the dissertation research process for the doctorate—often the project constitutes the foundational work for the dissertation. Doctoral dissertations by definition are contributory to the discovery of knowledge for the doctorate, with originality of execution, technique, conceptualization, and/or a reconfiguration of the problem in a new light. Interesting to note is that Art of the XX & XXI Centuries is the most active period in all degree categories, except for the habilitation dissertation, where it is nonexistent—from a sociological and professional perspective, full professorial status is affected, when French art history as an academic profession is concerned. Where Art of the XX & XXI Centuries captures 19.2% of doctoral dissertation research, Art of the Renaissance and Early Modern Times (XV-XVIII) captures 14.1%. Again, interesting is that the most active area for full professorial status by defending the habilitation dissertation are Art & archaeology of the Western Middle Ages (16.3%) and Art of the Renaissance and Early Modern Times (XV-XVIII) (24.5%), while the most active areas, Art of the XIX Century and Art of the XX & XXI Centuries are negligible.

The ancient period produces habilitation dissertations which attest to their small, but significant importance to art historical scholarship in France, belying the massive interest and focus on 19th and 20th century art and architecture.

Institutional Affiliation

French art history is practiced within the existing structure of Paris versus provincial institutional research and education. Geographical loci animate art history, where certain institutions dominate research production (See Table II).

Table II: Major Institutional Producers Above Fifty Research Memoires

Institution	No.	Institution	No.
U. Aix-Marseille I	359	U. Lyon II	724
U. Amiens	97	U. Montpellier III	270
U. Besancon	176	U. Nantes	86
U. Bordeaux III	246	U. Paris I	816
U. Clermont-Ferrand II	150	U. Paris IV	1,632
U. Dijon	229	U. Paris X	381
École du Louvre	337	U. Poitiers	386
École des hautes études en sciences sociales	75	U. Rennes II	234
École pratique des hautes études	65	U. Strasbourg II	285
U. Grenoble II	160	U. Tours	165
U. Lille III	461		

Parisian institutions constitute a critical mass of research reaching 3,306 research memoires, but do not effectively dominate the art historical landscape. Also, non-university institutions, i.e. École du Louvre, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, and École pratique des hautes études, represent a sizable grouping of graduate research emanating outside the Universities of Paris I, IV, and X. Provincial research facilities nestled within universities constitute loci of strengths. Since a critical feature of French higher education is the centralization and dominance of academic institutions in the Parisian region. Most humanities disciplines developed in Paris and fanned out to provincial universities and university level institutions in the provinces. So too with art history—but, with some very pronounced caveats; specializations may be found in provincial universities, where specialized studies and research were able to evolve. Often, this is the case with regional art and architecture, or when a particular professor established a center of specialization and excellence in a specific area of endeavor, Alsatian arts or alpine architecture, or Norman medieval art and archaeology. Since the 19th century the University of Lyon has been known for Egyptology, with strong centers in both Universities of Lille and Strasbourg.

Architectural and urban art history has emerged at the University de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines—however, the Universities of Paris I and IV, the Sorbonne components, of the Parisian university system, in existence since 1968, still dominate the art historical landscape. Examining the production of memoires, Parisian dominance, especially University of Paris IV, is evident, but with qualification. If examined for institutional affiliation, Ancient Greek Art and Archaeology and Art and Archaeology of the Western Middle Ages, one finds that provincial share of graduate research demonstrates a strong representation—57% for the former and 46.9% for the latter. Attesting to strengths in medieval studies since the 19th century, the University of Poitiers looms large in medieval studies, including art and archaeology. Another salient caveat is that provincial institutions may concentrate efforts at the master I and master II programs, and not at the doctoral level, where the Universities of Paris I and IV dominate in all fields of art history. A similar example is Renaissance art history, where the University of Tours is especially known for Renaissance Studies across all disciplines. It should be noted that both Parisian and provincial institutions are responsible for all areas of art history,

regardless of particular strengths. Although beyond this discussion, French art and architecture form a large subject emphases in French art history programs, especially medieval, Gaulle, Celtic, early modern, 19th and 20th century subjects. Studies devoted to patrimony and curatorship and analysis of collections features provincial subjects produced in provincial universities. Greater articulation of the data would reveal greater granulation of subjects and institutional affiliations.

Conclusion

This introductory survey is intended to offer academic librarians charged with art history reference and collections additional information covering existing grey literature that may be of help to users wishing to extend information searches into other art historical practice and traditions. Often using graduate research projects from advanced degrees conferred in other countries offers heretofore unknown or emerging insights that are relevant to the user. Pursuing art historical research and information requires casting one's net farther, often including foreign language materials, which are part and parcel of art history's normative practices. Librarians, students, and research faculty in art history, or archaeology can avail themselves of what is possibly available to them by using French graduate level research. Using the database available to the international community sponsored by INHA, the American users can ascertain the research landscape for what has been researched, and what may be available for consultation. This free service provides invaluable ideas and contributions to users requiring materials that may lend useful and cutting edge research in their respective fields of interest.

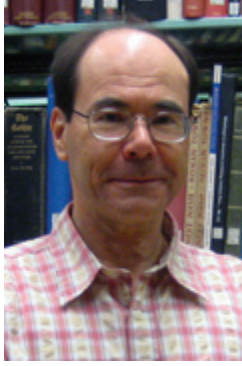
Although cursory in nature, this discussion serves to frame the characteristics inherent to the grey literature of French graduate research in art history. Beyond this discussion, a further articulation of bibliometric analysis could reveal permutations of research specialization and institutional affiliation. Discrete research specialization could be mapped, revealing more characteristics attendant to French art history as research endeavor. However, within the scope of introduction, American users will find a treasure trove of valuable work engaged performed by advance students in the various fields of art history. As art history is truly international in scope, language used

in research, and in venue, American users will discover a rich and intellectually layered scholarly literature.

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